

# Hillandale News



No. 231, Autumn 2000

# Calendar of Forthcoming Events

In response to requests, the scope of this Calendar has been enlarged to encompass CLPGS events as well as those organised by third parties. As before, information is supplied in good faith, but the Society and its agents take no responsibility for errors or omissions.

<b>OCTOBER 2000</b>	Sunday, 15 <sup>th</sup>		Record Fair, Motor Cycle Museum, Meriden, West Midlands
	Tuesday, 17 <sup>th</sup> evening	<b>CLPGS London</b>	John Cowley presents 'LONDON IS THE PLACE FOR ME'
<b>NOVEMBER 2000</b>	Saturday, 18 <sup>th</sup> evening	<b>CLPGS Midlands</b>	Ladies' Night – 'PERSONAL CHOICE'
	Sunday, 19 <sup>th</sup> afternoon	<b>CLPGS Northern</b>	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING; followed by 'CHILDHOOD MEMORIES, MUSIC AND THE GRAMOPHONE' – Members' Recollections
	Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup>		Wimbledon Record Fair
	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> evening	<b>CLPGS London</b>	John Passmore presents 'LADIES OF A GOLDEN AGE'
<b>DECEMBER 2000</b>	Thursday, 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Christie's (London)</b>	Mechanical Music Sale, 85 Old Brompton Road, London, SW7
	Tuesday, 19 <sup>th</sup> evening	<b>CLPGS London</b>	TRADITIONAL MEMBERS' NIGHT – Members & Visitors present their own records on the theme of 'ONE FOR THE RECORD' – Who or what would you carry into the new Millennium, and why?
<b>JANUARY 2001</b>	Tuesday, 16 <sup>th</sup> evening	<b>CLPGS London</b>	Bernard Smith ( <i>Member of the Lewisham Recorded Music Society</i> ) presents – 'SINGERS OF THE CENTURY' – Perhaps not the best, but certainly unique.
	Saturday, 20 <sup>th</sup> evening	<b>CLPGS Midlands</b>	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING; followed by BYFR (BRING YOUR FAVOURITE RECORD) – Members present their own choice of records.

## VENUES and TIMES.

Unless stated otherwise, CLPGS Meetings take place at the following standard times and places –

- ◇ LONDON – Swedenborg Hall, Bloomsbury Way, London, WC, starting at 7.00 p.m.
- ◇ MIDLANDS – Birmingham, but a temporary venue at present (contact Phil Bennett for details on 01902-743946). Starting times are 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.
- ◇ NORTHERN – Alston Hall, Alston Lane, Longridge, Preston, starting at 1.30 p.m.
- ◇ WEST OF ENGLAND – Venues alter (contact Paul Morris on [REDACTED]).

Cover picture – EMI Chairman Eric Nicoli (left) receiving from Consumer & Corporate Affairs Minister, Kim Howells (right) the Centenary Trade Mark Award for the Nipper Trade Mark.

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**Issue No. 231 – Autumn 2000**

**CLPGS Ltd.**

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# EDITORS' DESK

We have a number of news items to mention this time. Firstly, Mr. Bob Carlisle of London, SE, advises us that the book on Peter Dawson by Peter Burgis of Australia is nearing the publication stage, as both the manuscript and the discography are now complete.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NO.; A CORRECTION, AND A PLEA

By the time you read this, Edward Parker, of the Editorial Group, will have moved house, though still in Wolverhampton. His new address and telephone number are given on the Contents page, so please take note, if you wish to get in touch.

We included in the Summer issue the E-mail address for the Editorial Group, but unfortunately, we spelt it wrongly. The correct spelling is - [REDACTED].

Please also see the **PLEA FOR A VOLUNTEER** on page 128, due to the impending resignation of our Membership Secretary, Suzanne Coleman.

Again, by the time you read this, the Arrangement mentioned in our previous issue between Joe Pengelly and 'ELECTRONICS WORLD' magazine should have come to fruition. We mentioned in our last issue that Joe Pengelly had produced a CD featuring the electrical realisation of cylinders, and that 'ELECTRONICS WORLD' were intending to distribute copies with their August 2000 issue. What we are now told is to happen should be publication in the October 2000 issue, published in September, when the magazine is expected to offer the CD for sale at a special price to readers. We

also understand that Joe Pengelly will have a supply of the CDs which he is prepared to sell personally to CLPGS Members at a greatly reduced price. Joe's address will be found in the Plymouth section of the Membership List, circulated with this issue.

We have had some requests for the Calendar of Events to include forthcoming Society meetings as well as their being listed in the once a year publication of the full years' programme for the various Society Groups. This seems to us to be eminently sensible, so will be adopted as from this issue.

Eddie and Elaine Shaw are forming an Association of Seventy-Eight Record Researchers and Discographers (ASERRD), with the object of bringing together into one database a list of such people, so as to be aware of who is doing what, and thus hopefully eliminate duplication of effort, as well as ensuring that relevant data can be passed on to the relevant researcher. Collectors are also invited to subscribe. Subscription costs £5. Details can be obtained from Eddie and Elaine Shaw, whose address is in the Central London section of the Membership List, circulated with this issue.

Not for the first time, a Member has written requesting an article (or articles) on disc-cutting equipment, such as the '2300'. This brings to mind Rolf Rekdal's photograph in issue no. 226, Summer 1999. Now that these machines are part of history, it would form an interesting subject, if written by someone with experience in the field. Any offers?

Please note that material intended for inclusion in HILLDALE NEWS must reach the Editorial Group not less than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**. Hence, the deadline for the Winter 2000/2001 issue will be the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2000. Copyright on all articles in HILLDALE NEWS remains the property of the authors. Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Group.

# 'Every Dog Has Its Day' from Ruth Edge

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2000, an invited audience of some fifty people and one very special Dog arrived at EMI's Abbey Road Recording Studios for a very particular event.

What was the occasion? Not to meet EMI's latest recording star, but to honour somebody who has done more for the record industry (and EMI in particular!) than anyone. Yes, if you haven't already guessed, we were there to honour Nipper, he of Dog and Gramophone fame.

Consumer & Corporate Affairs Minister, Kim Howells presented EMI Chairman Eric Nicoli with the **first ever** Centenary Trade Mark Award. Devised by The Patent Office, the award recognises the commitment that many British businesses have devoted to this aspect of their intellectual property. Peter Lawrence, Director & Assistant Registrar of The Patent Office's Trade Marks Registry said 'businesses often work hard to build their image and this takes much time, money and research. The awards are a way of acknowledging the effort companies such as EMI have put into sustaining their brands and reputation through trade marks'. Further awards will be made this year to other worthy recipients.

Full details of EMI's Trade Mark are given in 'The Collector's Guide To His Master's Voice Nipper Souvenirs' (Edge & Petts 1997), but here are a few

reminders. Born in Bristol in 1884, Nipper died aged 11 in September 1895, after a stroke. He was buried at Kingston-upon-Thames. Barraud's amended painting now featuring Nipper and a Trade Mark Gramophone was delivered to the company in October 1899.

Nipper made his first appearance on company advertising material in 1900 – the Record Supplement for January. In February 1900 the Gramophone Company applied for 'Memorandum of the assignment of Copyright of the painting Dog Looking into and Listening to a Gramophone and entitled "His Master's Voice"'. EMI has been using Nipper ever since and it has become one of the world's most famous Trade Marks. Today HMV Shops UK Ltd. are the major users of the Nipper Mark in Great Britain, under license from EMI Records.



Kim Howells (left) and Eric Nicoli (right) with HMV's new Nipper look-alike, Meg.



# THE GOOD COMPANIONS

## The 101 and Other Compact HMV Portables, part 6

### by Dave Cooper

#### Miscellany

After the war, it would take some time for a revival in the fortunes of a handy movable record player. The Dansette, an electrical portable machine, would, about 15 years later, rival every major maker by its versatility. It could play not only 78s but also the new microgroove 45rpm 7" singles and both ten- and twelve-inch LPs. It did not require very regular needle replacements or winding up, and both tone and volume could be adjusted by the turn of a knob. It did have difficulty playing through records under ten inches in size. This was due to the playing area being extended closer to the centre of the record to make up for the smaller diameter. Automatic record players were set to lift the tone arm off the record at approximately 4 inches from the centre hole. Still, records could be stacked up safely and played one after another. You could replay the same record without having to revisit the machine. All this and still in the monaural period!

#### Cleaning and Repairing Portable Gramophones

##### Cleaning the Case

Generally, portable gramophones are covered with hardwearing leather-cloth. This may need cleaning and/or repairing, especially on the outside of the case.

Make sure that no areas to be cleaned are covered in paper. Most machines were subject to smoke from open fires and from smokers. Since it was last regularly used, a gramophone may have had years of exposure to damp in a garage or loft. The dirt acquired can be quite difficult to remove.

It is best to remove all metal parts such as corners, escutcheons, locks, catches, etc., before you start any work. Be careful when unscrewing metal parts. Screws which may not have been interfered with since original assembly may be affected by rust and resist removal. Personally, before I start to clean a machine both inside and out, I like to take the record compartment (as on the 101, that is) off.

The metal parts should clean up with polish. I prefer the chrome cleaner paste you buy from car accessory shops. This may be too harsh for some metalwork, so it may be better to use something less abrasive if you have any doubts. Be careful not to get over-enthusiastic and remove nickel- or chrome-plate! Rusted screws and clips may need to be wire-brushed or rubbed with abrasive papers of different grades. Some prefer to use wire wool, as it tends to reduce scratching. Re-nickelling or re-chroming of parts is a possibility but you may have to wait until you have a reasonable amount of items to be treated to make it a

viable proposition. The alternatives to this are to leave any bare metal as it is (hopefully any remaining plate has been protected during the cleaning process), or – coat the bare metal with clear varnish.

Frankly, I would not advise the latter, and I only mention it because I know that some people do carry out this treatment to slow down the corrosive process. Varnish invariably ages poorly on metal and will craze and flake away. I don't think it is worth the effort, but you may feel differently.

Locks and catches are often rusted and need a lot of attention. I usually squirt 'WD40' into the lock before I start. Keys can usually be made or found for the locks. So far, I have only found one lock broken and easily found a replacement. Locks on portables were there to keep the lids closed in transit, certainly not to stop the use of the machine. (You could acquire a machine without the top or bottom part of the lock where someone locked the lid and lost the key.) I like, if I can, to make replacement keys if they are missing. I am not an expert key maker, but you can usually find an old key that you can file down to operate the locks on portables. It is helpful if you can borrow one to use as a guide, but all keys are not the same. Original keys that I do have for portables have no Gramophone Company, HMV or other identifying markings.

Transfers should be avoided in the cleaning process as they may have become brittle and start to flake.

Black machines can be brightened up after cleaning by the use of black shoe polish. This should be carefully applied with a cloth or brush and polished off with a brush and finally a duster. Results are surprisingly good.

Coloured machines require more work and care. You need to decide what the original colour was by, for example, removal of the metal corners or close examination of the inside of the case. Some books advise use of heavily coloured renovating polishes to smarten up cases. I feel that this should be the last resort. I prefer to try and clean the case and use neutral polish to smarten up the leather-cloth, thus maintaining originality.

The case may be slightly dented and have little chips out of the leather-cloth. The odd dent or mark on a case is acceptable.

If a case is really bad ***don't buy the machine!*** I would never fully re-cover a case, although new leather-cloth is now available in black. Small damaged areas can be re-covered using pieces carefully cut from overlapping cloth from under the motor-board and glued in place. (I try and keep any old leather-cloth for repairs like these from old record cases that are in bad condition.) The cleaning and polishing process can then start.

Only where a turntable felt is either missing or in a dreadful state should it be replaced. Careful brushing of a dirty turntable felt can restore it to a reasonable appearance. My belief is that a machine should be kept as original as possible.

### **Repairing Soundboxes and Motors, etc.**

HMV used to lubricate springs with graphite grease, which hardens over a number of years. This causes the spring either to stick together or hard deposits stop the spring from moving freely in the barrel. This problem can manifest itself in curious groans and noises where the



spring slips or jumps unnaturally. One of my own machines used to behave like this. So violent was the action of the spring that it made the soundbox leap off a record I was playing and deposited it several grooves forward. I jumped too!

Even on non-HMV motors it is wise to let your dealer re-grease the springs in your gramophones and lubricate other moving parts. If this job is not carried out you are risking a broken spring or a heart attack.

It may be prudent to replace a weak spring (particularly on the no. 425 and 410 motors) at the point the re-greasing process is considered. Later 101s have the no. 59 motor, with a longer spring providing more power.

If a soundbox rattles or buzzes noisily it will require attention. The rubber gaskets on either face of the mica diaphragm may turn brittle and harden with age. This deterioration also causes general loss in sound quality as the diaphragm cannot vibrate and move freely. Damage may be even more obvious like tears in the mica. I remember a clumsy friend of mine at school accidentally putting his finger through a mica diaphragm. There can be other problems with the stylus bar, which may need adjustment. These problems can result in undue wear of your 78s.

The early mica-fronted no. 4 soundbox was made from a brass base, blackened on the back and nickel-plated on the front. Both plates, held together with screws, are generally strong enough to be repaired. First, the back plate base metal, then the front as well, was replaced by an alloy, which over time may become brittle and therefore better left alone. If in doubt, ask your repairer for advice. The no. 5a and 5b soundboxes suffer from the

same problem. The no. 16 soundbox was not designed for repair. It was moulded together rather than held by screws. As such, the only cure for a noisy no. 16 soundbox may be to find a replacement.

Unless you know what you are doing, I advise that you leave repairs to soundboxes and motors to experts.

### **Broken Parts**

Broken parts are obviously a problem. A dealer usually will have a stock of parts (taken off broken machines) or can supply new reproduction parts. It is common for example, for winding handle clips to be broken. You may have difficulty obtaining original parts on demand, or at all in some cases. There are other solutions – make your own replacement parts, or contact various specialists from the telephone book in your own area. A local shoe repairer makes replacement leather carrying handles for me.

### **Missing Parts**

Missing parts are a headache. A machine could have any amount of parts missing, but the most likely ones in the portables I have discussed are –

- ◇ the turntable circlip (removed by previous owners to lubricate the motor and subsequently lost). This, if not replaced, causes the turntable to revolve (or try to) when the machine is carried or stored on its side. A temporary solution is to push a paper clip over the centre spindle.
- ◇ the record folder on model 99s. Record dealers are the most likely to have these as they ended up with the rest of an owner's record collection and were not replaced on the machine. Unfortunately, the 99



folders were specific to the machine and others are not good replacements. I have only seen one model 99 to date with the record folder still attached. A missing folder only affects the cosmetics of the machine, however.

- ◇ Poor Nipper goes 'walkies' from some portable machines. I have noticed a number of 101s minus the record tray where the trade mark would normally be. Even the raised panel in the lid of the 102 is occasionally vandalised. At least two coloured 102s have passed my way in this condition. Considering how easy it is to find an HMV trade mark if you really want one (and how small transfers are on machines) it seems a rather wasteful way of working. Replacement record trays and plinths can be expensive since they would usually have to come from a 'broken up for parts' machine.

### **What Should I Pay for a Portable Gramophone?**

As with most collectibles, a gramophone is only worth what a person is willing to pay. The following criteria will apply – the condition, whether the gramophone works or not, and what mark-up has been put on the machine by the seller. The latter is dependent on what was originally paid for the machine and whether work or parts were required to render it saleable.

In the 1960s, as discussed earlier, you may have been expected to find anything from 10s. to £1 10s for a black 101. The prices, as one would expect, have generally increased with time. Currently, a working black 101 could cost anything

from say, £25 upwards, depending on condition and honesty of the dealer involved. Coloured machines always attract higher prices, again dependent on finish and condition. They originally cost more, and sold in smaller numbers.

I know that some dealers use recent auction house catalogues as a guide for what they charge. This is outrageous, since a price paid at an auction could depend for example on how many people turned up and showed interest. If two or more people bid against one another the final price may be many times over the market value.

There are of course, dealers and dealers. I would for example, leave severely alone anyone who might attempt to sell you a 'crapophone' as a genuine machine. The poor portable is often disembowelled to provide the innards for 'crapophones'.

### **Why Choose an HMV Portable at all?**

#### **Advantages**

1. Models 101 and 102 are outstanding both in style and performance. The sound reproduction and general reliability is at least comparable with most other gramophones.
2. You can carry around your Good Companion anywhere, providing you remember to change hands every now and then. (Otherwise, this point belongs with the Disadvantages list under the heading 'One arm becomes longer than the other'.)
3. Most portable machines can be stored easily.
4. Generally, portable machines are often less expensive to buy than some other 'home' models, as they are more

widely available. Some coloured machines may prove costly, depending on rarity or desirability.

5. There is a good variety of finishes to choose from (and of fittings, if you want to go that far.)

6. Spares for most models are not hard to find. Soundboxes can be a problem though, especially if good replacements for no. 16, 5a and 5b are required. An original chrome no. 4 soundbox for a late 101 is unlikely to have survived in excellent condition.

7. You still get that great gramophone 'smell' – a mixture of metal, wood, oil, grease and polish.

#### **Disadvantages**

1. Record damage caused by poor storage. The model 99 was the only portable providing minimal care for the fragile 78 with a record folder. The other machines mentioned encouraged the

storage of records *without covers* when not in use, in record compartments or in record trays. I cannot be the only one who gets frustrated with badly scuffed records.

2. You can't close the lid (on most portables – certainly true of HMV machines) when playing your records, which means you are subject to needle hiss and crackle. Many original owners seem to have tried to close the lid before putting the soundbox into the storage position. This is the cause of the familiar needle scarring in the inside lid covering.

3. Although soundboxes may take fibre needles, they are not terribly successful. ■

#### **Further Reading**

Number Please - C, Proudfoot, *HILLANDALE NEWS*, August 1982

101 Interesting Things - C. Proudfoot, *HILLANDALE NEWS*, February 1990

## **HELP!! A VOLUNTEER WANTED!**

**Our Membership Secretary, Suzanne Coleman, will shortly be resigning from the task. We are now in urgent need of a volunteer who will be able to carry on this essential rôle for the Society.**

The Membership Secretaryship is a vital function in the Society, without which the Society will be in danger of disintegration, as subscriptions will not be collected, the Society's income will collapse, and the *HILLANDALE NEWS* could not then be printed and circulated.

If you are able to operate a database on a personal computer, and have the time and commitment, please consider volunteering for this task.

**Please contact our Chairman, Howard Hope, on [REDACTED] if you wish to help the Society continue in its present successful existence.**



# Two Portable Problems – A Solution to One of Them

## by Ivor Abelson

All too often a portable gramophone, even if of generally good appearance, will be let down by two areas of wear – the carrying handle and the turntable mat. With a gramophone with a 12" turntable, a ready-cut felt pad is still available from vinyl specialists. It tends to be thicker than the original, yet does not look all that odd. Indeed, the extra thickness provides decoupling and, to my ears, thus improves the sound. It must be said that there is a faction, of which Russ Andrews is certainly the most widely read, who are against decoupling and believe it replaces one set of faults with worse. He would go for a stiff plastic sheet. Either way, with a 12" platter, you can buy what you want.

With portables, it is a different story. The platter may be 10" or smaller. You can obtain suitable felt from a handicrafts store or salvage it from a scrap 12" platter. It is unfortunate that whilst 12" diameter felts keep coming up from scrapped electric turntables, we seldom see smaller felts in good condition! Having got our felt, we have to cut it to size. Originally, the felts were die cut, so on a factory basis there is no problem. Our difficulty today is to cut cleanly a stretchable material. It can be done, but my finding is, not neatly enough to be satisfactory. If readers know better, I would be pleased to hear from them.

The second problem area is the carrying handle. The best examples all had a

spring steel core covered with leather, but hand perspiration has done its baleful work, and it is usual to find the leather missing, or, if still present, rotten. Modern handles are made of plastic or fabric and, if fitted, will involve mutilation of the case and will look so very wrong. Even if a traditional leather handle can be found in a travel goods repairers' shop, it will be designed to go on a suitcase, not a gramophone. Fortunately, there is an answer. There are craftsmen repairers who can re-cover the spring with leather and can usually find the right shade of colour. If the handle you are dealing with has no spring and is self-supporting leather, it may be possible to laminate sheets of leather together to get something strong enough which still looks reasonably right. However, it is best to seek a salvaged spring. Very many portable radios had their carrying handles replaced, and as radio repairers from the '40s to the '60s tend to be hoarders – a legacy from the war, perhaps – the internal springs, with hoops at each end, can be found.

The modern handle spring has no hoops but is slotted at each end. Such a handle can be re-covered with leather. The end caps will have to be used with a bolt through the gramophone case, but very often, no new holes may be needed to be made in the case. At worst, they will be in a position that will be covered if the more correct handle is obtained.

Perhaps the foregoing puts the cart before the horse. The first question often put to me before that of "How should I smarten it up?" is "Ought I to buy a portable as the lid cannot be closed whilst playing?" The best aid to making the decision is to listen to a gramophone with a lid to be closed whilst playing both with the lid closed and open. If the loss of sound quality on opening the lid sounds too bad to your ear, then most likely, a portable is a poor choice for you.

There were portables with lids designed to be closed whilst playing but few were sold. No doubt the buyers did not like the extra bulk, weight and cost, and did not see the need for closing the lid during play. So this type of portable is rarely seen and can be expected to command a scarcity price. Another disadvantage is that with few exceptions, the horn was empirical, so the sound must be mediocre.

A much rarer item is a portable version of the HMV 103. It is not clear if any of these were made at Hayes, or whether an after-sale job was done to fit a lid catch, a tone arm clip and a carrying handle. Some detail alteration to the case to allow it to stand like a portable is also made. Today, it would be morally and

economically wrong to alter a 103 in this way.

There is one remaining point in the decision-making process when you consider buying a portable. This is to block the horn with a cloth and listen to the sound off the soundbox alone. If it is loud and raucous, the machine is not a good choice. You can put up with bad sound short-term but beware, in the longer term, it may upset you.

On no account be put off by snob values as regards portables. You can get a worthwhile example for tens of pounds, not the hundreds of pounds you must expect to pay for a more prestigious gramophone. Also, it is important to make a start if you are serious about owning a gramophone. As Confucius said, 'The longest journey starts with a single step'. Journeys make me think of portable gramophones.

#### **Postscript.**

The firm, Woodford Shoes, will re-cover handles with leather. Their address is 36A The Broadway, Woodford Green, Essex; IG8 0HJ; and telephone, [REDACTED]. They accept work by post. The typical cost is £8, but add the cost of return postage. They also have leather handles, but these are for suitcases and look out of place on a gramophone. ■

### **ANTIQUE PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE THAI SOCIETY (APGTS)**

The Editors have received (courtesy of Miles Mallinson) a copy of the APGTS Newsletter. This is a beautifully produced 4-page A4 format document, printed throughout in full colour, with illustrations of numerous phonographs and horn gramophones, and mention of several notable CLPGS Members, including Jean-Paul Agnard, Christian Müller, and David Smith. Unfortunately, but as might be expected, this newsletter is printed almost entirely in Thai script, so little can be said about its editorial content. And our attempts to obtain a translation locally in the Midlands from a Thai speaker have so far failed, due to pressure of work on the part of the translator. If anyone can obtain a translation from the Thai script into English, we would be pleased to hear from you.



# The Balmain Gramophone, part 1

## by Peter Heath

### Introduction

The 'Balmain' is a machine which does not have a tone arm, the soundbox being fitted directly to the inlet end of a long, straight, exponential horn which is mounted horizontally

The horn is supported close to its centre of gravity and moves forward on rollers, balls, wheels or floats in such a way that the needle tip moves in a straight line passing through the record centre. All of the forces in the system are concentrated at the needle tip, which necessitates that the machine be played level, and that the horn's horizontal motion be almost frictionless. A separate attachment adjacent to the soundbox is arranged to counteract needle drag which results from friction between groove and needle tip.

### History

Research by fellow society member Frank James has produced the following information.

Charles Henry Balmain applied for a patent of his ideas on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1920, under the heading 'Improvements in Gramophones', and followed it with a complete specification which was accepted on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1922. Patent no. 177215 was then issued on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1922.

Horn support was to be by 'balls, rollers, or wheels on rails', with the added alternative of floating the mass in two mercury-filled troughs. Lateral support

was to be provided by side wheels in contact with parallel vertical faces.

A description of the machine was published in 'The Gramophone' of March 1926, and in June 1927, the same magazine announced that a model was available for demonstration in the NGS Room at 461 Oxford Street, London. The table model, with 'unspillable mercury floats' was priced at £25, and similar cabinet models in oak or mahogany were priced respectively at £50 and £60.

Each machine, it was said, would be personally tested and signed by Mr. Balmain.

The final reference in 'The Gramophone' appears to have been on the editorial page of March 1935, when comparisons of performance were made on several machines, all of which were fitted with large external horns. Machines named were the EMG Mark Xb, the Expert Senior, and the Cascade, the latter having been fitted with a 'new tone arm set in mercury'.

The Editor went on to say, 'the claim of the Cascade to be called realistic is the success with which the reproduction avoids the slightest suggestion that it is coming out of a horn at all. That was the success of the old Balmain, whose forwardness of tone was a revelation in those days'.

It is very unlikely that any Balmain's have survived and so far as is known the only pictorial evidence of their existence is a photograph in Wilson & Webb's 1929 book<sup>(1)</sup>, as shown in Figure 1.

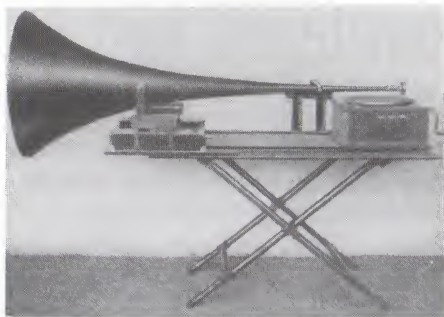


Fig. 47. Balmain Gramophone with straight horn.

Figure 1. The photograph of the Balmain gramophone from Wilson & Webb's 1929 book<sup>(1)</sup>

## The Questions

Why was there an interval of over six years between the first patent submission and the machine becoming commercially available? Balmain's first ideas were the correct ones – a rolling system easily reduces horn carriage friction to almost zero and the analysis of needle tip forces due to warped or eccentric records would not have been a problem at that time.

Why were the production models so unnecessarily complicated? Wilson & Webb's book stated that 'the carriage and horn have side arms carrying ball bearing wheels which engage with upright bearing surfaces of glass to ensure a straight line motion'<sup>(2)</sup>. Four ball bearing wheels to restrain a needle drag force of about 30 grams!

The same page also informs us that the Balmain was the favourite gramophone of Mr. Compton Mackenzie, Editor of 'The Gramophone'.

Why did the patent submission refer to only one supposed advantage of the Balmain design? This was that because the needle travelled in a straight line across the record diameter, the reproduction should be more faithful to

the recording. As a comparison, the HMV 163 tone arm angle changes by only 8° from the centre of a 10" record, and it is very unlikely that the difference in quality or volume of sound would be detectable.

The real advantage of the Balmain idea is that the diaphragm forces are acting directly against a static mass of about 3kg (horn and carriage) and therefore no energy is lost by moving other components. The article in the Spring 1999 issue of HILLANDALE NEWS, 'Mechanics of Soundboxes', details this matter more fully.

Finally, was the Balmain the acoustic gramophone's greatest missed opportunity? It is known that Mr. E. M. Ginn lined the inside of his tone arms with lead (electro-deposition?) and until recently it had been the author's impression that this was for acoustic reasons. But had Mr. Ginn understood something which Mr. Balmain had overlooked, i.e., the importance of mass for the diaphragm to pump against?

## A Millennium Balmain

From the results of Frank James' researches arose the question, 'Could a full-size Balmain be made from the information made available?' The investment of design and construction time would obviously be considerable, and so there had to be a very good chance that a completed machine would work reliably and be 'user-friendly'.

It was a fortunate coincidence that the 'Mechanics of Soundboxes' article had been published only a few months earlier, as its contents were closely related to the Balmain design, and it was at this point that the author became involved.



Following a letter from Mr. James, work began on the theoretical mechanics of the machine in very early January 2000 and was substantially completed about three weeks later. The indications were that a full-scale replica, true to the Balmain proposals, could be built and that it would work.

Two problems awaited solutions, the provision of near frictionless motion (without mercury!), and the manufacture of a *papier-mâché* exponential horn. There being sufficient confidence that these problems could be overcome, the decision to start work was taken at the end of January.

The remainder of this part of the article will be devoted to the design and manufacture of the exponential horn mould and its associated supporting frame. The second and final part, in a future issue of HILLANDALE NEWS, will describe the machine design, main dimensions and the measured acoustic performance, as well as details of horn manufacture.

#### Footnotes.

- (1) *Modern Gramophones and Electrical Reproducers*, by P. Wilson, M.A., and G. W. Webb; Cassell and Co. Ltd., 1929.
- (2) *Ibidem*, p. 123.

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Exponential Horn

The shape of the horn is related to the mathematical constant 'e', which has a value of 2.718, and its use enables the horn diameter at any point in the length to be predicted. The calculation is best done on a basic low-cost scientific calculator, and only two keys need be used,  $e^x$  and Ln.

Working in mm. throughout, divide the outlet diameter by the inlet diameter, and use the Ln key to find the log. value. For the Balmain, this would be -

$$600 \div 20 = 30,$$

for which  $\text{Ln} = 3.4012$ . This figure is then made equal to the intended length of the horn divided by a constant of unknown value.

For the Balmain, this produces -

$$3.4012 = 1360 \div \text{constant}.$$

So the value of the constant is -

$$1360 \div 3.4012 = 400.$$

The diameter at any point D is then equal to -

$$20 \times e^{(L \div 400)},$$

where L is length from the inlet end, and 20 is the inlet diameter.

As an example, let L be 800, so -

$$800 \div 400 = 2.$$

Use the  $e^x$  key and enter 2 to give 7.389.

$$7.389 \times 20 = 147.8$$

i.e., the diameter 800mm from the inlet end.

No further mathematical ability is required.

## The Mould Frame

Start with a plank about 6 feet long, which is wide and thick enough to be rigid, say  $8 \times 1$  inches. Fit an upright at each end of the same section and secure with corner braces on the outer faces, the overall height being about 20 inches.

Obtain a suitable length of steel pipe, say 20mm conduit, or  $\frac{1}{2}$ " gas, and cut an U-shaped bearing slot in the top of one of the uprights. Fit a retaining strip held down with a removable pin so that the

pipe, when fitted, is secured but free to revolve.

Fit a ball bearing support to the other upright on a small rigid platform so that the bearing centre is level with the U support at the other end. An old bicycle pedal was used, but other free running items may come to mind. Bear in mind that this assembly will eventually support a rotating load of around 15kg.

Finally, arrange a removable centred connection between pipe and ball bearing support, and fit a light-weight handle to the other end where it overhangs the U-bearing.

The frame stability is also improved by fitting two battens about 2 feet long across the underside.

### The Mould

Set the pipe in position and purchase a roll of heavy wall backing paper of typical thickness, 0.01". By use of a coarse tooth hacksaw, the roll may be cut into paper tape rolls of any width and these are then used to build up the shape in 10mm width until a diameter of about 75mm is reached. Start and finish each end with double-sided sticky tape and gauge the diameter at each step with outside calipers. Once the process is under way, the body is quickly built up with tapes up to 100mm wide.

Find a second person to turn the handle as the tape is wound on, and use the calculator to give the diameter required at each step.

At about 75mm diameter, change the method of construction as follows. Obtain a quantity of heavy duty stiff cardboard and expanded polystyrene sheet from redundant packaging or some other source. 25mm polystyrene sheet is available in large sheets from Wickes at

low cost. From now on, the mould is built up of cardboard/polystyrene, and the cardboard defines the exact diameter at that point.

Mark the horn end-point on the pipe with a clear fine line and from now on measure the remaining length from this line. The term  $L$  in the equation now becomes full horn length less the distance to the next cardboard disc.

Cut both cardboard and polystyrene discs at the predicted diameter and drill the cardboard with a hole saw at its exact centre so that it is a good push fit onto the pipe. The polystyrene may be bored with less precision as it will be positioned by the cardboard.

After the last cardboard disc is in position, make a heavy disc from, say, 20mm plywood of radius about 25mm greater than the mould end, and again drill centrally.

Finally, make a split wooden clamp to fit the pipe squarely, so that the plywood may be pressed up to the mould end and be secured in position.



Figure 2. The mould frame and the mould being made, showing the alternate sheets of cardboard and polystyrene.

The mould is now ready for permanent assembly and this is begun by lifting away all of the discs. Replace them in the correct order with about four parts of PVA joiners' glue between each layered joint and make sure that each polystyrene disc is centralised with its cardboard



partner. Now fit the plywood disc, press it firmly down and fit the split clamp.

Leave for 24 hours in the moulding frame.

The horn mould now has its shape defined as a staircase of polystyrene and the 'treads' must now be removed down to cardboard disc level to reveal the true shape. The easiest way to do this is to use a hot wire cutter which consists of a short piece of fire element wire stretched between two nails and connected to a six volt battery charger, or similar, with an output of not less than 4 amps. Knock the nails into a short piece of wood and vary the hot wire length until a dull red heat is produced. This method is very quick, clean and effective and with a second person to rotate the mould takes only a few minutes.

So far as is known this process does not involve any toxic risk, but some odour is produced and it is recommended that the hot wire cutting be done outdoors or in a well ventilated space.

Complete the trimming by careful use of a Surform tool or fine rasp after which the surface will show a degree of surface roughness. This, and the paper tape end, should be brought to a true finish by applying Polyfilla mixed with a little excess water and applied with something like an old credit card. Note, that by turning the card edge, an angle will be found where the horn mould surface appears flat. Maintain this angle of contact and there will be no need to bend the card as the filler is applied. (This condition occurs when the concave and convex curves of the mould cancel each other out and a virtually straight line is produced.) Use this property also when finishing with the Surform tool or rasp.

After the filler has dried a medium grade abrasive paper should be rubbed over the mould surface to remove any remaining roughness.

Two stages now remain to complete the mould and the first of these is to apply two coats of best quality outdoor grade emulsion paint to form a waterproof barrier. Finally, it is worth using a roll of electricians' PVC tape half lapped onto the finished mould for about two thirds of its length. Do not go too far as a steep slope causes the tape to slip 'downhill' after a few hours and form wrinkles. Warm the tape with a hairdryer as it is wound on if the weather is cool, so that it stretches a little.



Figure 3. Winding the electricians' tape onto the horn mould, whilst using a hairdryer to warm it.

The horn mould is now complete, but before using it for the first time, two fitments should be added to the wooden frame which will be of benefit during horn production.

### The Thickness Gauge

Prepare a rectangle from 6mm plywood, or similar, of length the same as the planned horn and width about two feet, and mark out the whole piece with a series of pencilled lines at intervals of 50mm, and which are square to the long sides.

Now use the calculator to give the horn radius (half the diameter) at each 50mm

step along the length and mark out the horn shape as a measured point on each line. At the flared end where the angle rises steeply it is worth adding a few intermediate points for greater accuracy.

Join all the points together to form the exponential curve of the finished horn but do not cut along the line until the fit of gauge to frame has been checked.

This gauge plate should be fitted upright from the base of the frame directly under the centre line of the steel pipe bearings, and be fastened so that the curve of the gauge and that of the mould are 10mm apart over the full length.

Only two angle brackets are needed for the fitting, and if slotted holes are put into the gauge, adjustment for final height is simple and effective. The gauge is used as an eye guide to shape and concentricity of the horn as it grows in thickness, rather than as an exact measure, which would require extreme accuracy of construction in the mould and frame.

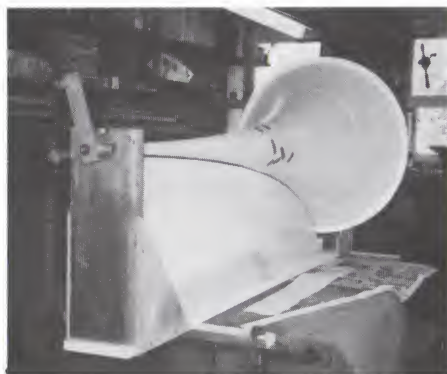


Figure 4. The mould and thickness gauge mounted in the mould frame.

### Rotating the mould

Throughout the construction of the mould and the horn produced on it, there is a frequent need to rotate the mould,

either by use of the handle, or simply pulling it around to a new position.

During the wet phase of horn manufacture, it is strongly recommended that the mould be slowly and continuously rotated in order to prevent any tendency of the wet horn to sag due to gravity, and to promote rapid and even drying of the glued papers.

Since the rotating mass is perfectly balanced (with the handle removed) and very free running on its ball bearing end, the power required to turn it is of a very low level, probably no more than about one watt. Small geared motors of this size are made for a wide variety of uses and are generally available from electrical surplus stores at low cost. Choose a unit with an output between, say, one and ten watts and one and twenty revolutions per minute and arrange it to drive the mould at about one rpm.

If the output speed permits of a direct coupling to either end of the pipe shaft then so much the better, but most units will require speed reduction. This is best achieved by a belt drive arranged as follows.

Decide upon the reduction ratio and install a circle of wood screws at the chosen diameter onto the outer face of the plywood end flange. Use something like  $4 \times 20$  screws inserted to half their length and make certain that the ring is concentric with the pipe centre. The screws should be no further apart than about three inches.

Fit a pulley of suitable diameter to the motor output and attach the unit to a flat piece of wood so that the driving assembly may be fixed to the frame base with a small G-clamp. Attach the



electrical connections, making sure that no live metal is exposed, and that any metal parts are bonded to the earth conductor.

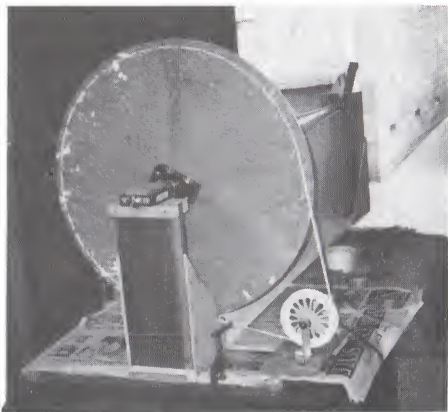


Figure 5. The belt drive on the end of the mould; also showing the bicycle pedal bearing on the mould frame.

The belt drive is best made from any ribbon type material which is slightly elastic and two turns around the motor pulley may be needed to provide the grip to drive the load. The author's machine used an old pushchair wheel of five inches diameter. This offered very low frictional grip, but it was sufficient.

Finally, run the whole system for a couple of hours to prove reliability. Everything is now ready for use.

### Concluding remarks

The foregoing descriptions and ideas are not intended to provide an exhaustive treatment of the subject and it is to be hoped that if there is sufficient interest then further contributions will be made via HILLANDALE NEWS. The work began from a point of zero knowledge, and the author would like to express his thanks to the two technically-minded friends who helped throughout with ideas, discussions and the supply of materials.

Throughout construction, there is a recurring need to calculate horn radius or diameter at a measured length from either end. Present-day scientific calculators frequently include a 'formula' function which is ideal for this work, and a typical programme for the Balmain would read –

$$D = 20 \times e^x(L \div 400).$$

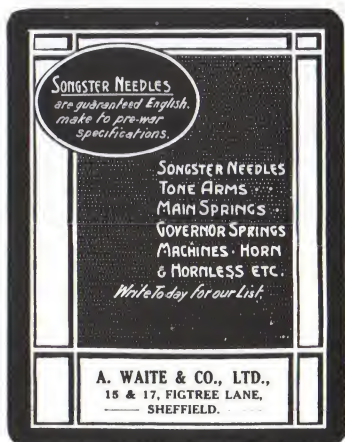
The diameter is then instantly displayed whenever the prompt 'L = ?' is answered with a value. D values from the large end would be entered as –

$$D = 20 \times e^x((1360 - L) \div 400).$$

Longhand methods offer the same accuracy, but take longer.

Here endeth the first lesson, but let any would-be constructor be assured that his efforts will not go unrewarded. To paraphrase 'The Gramophone' editorial comments of March 1935, the Balmain really does have a 'forwardness of tone which is a revelation'. The volume and clarity are outstanding and there is a total absence of tinniness, the bass notes being particularly strong.

*To be concluded ...*



# We Also Have Our Own Records, part 15

## 'Encore Records' to 'Express & Star'

by Frank Andrews

**ENCORE RECORDS.** Generally produced with two titles to each face, these, pedantically speaking, were mis-named as '*encore*' strictly means 'again' rather than 'more'. In no instance was the first title on a side repeated, and if '*encore*' was to liberally mean more from the same artists, there were a few instances only, where the same artists were presented performing the two separate titles, thereby giving some aptness to the name of the label.



Figure 1. The 'Encore Record' label.

ENCORE RECORDS were recorded and pressed by Beka Records of Berlin, the non-English recordings being derived from the similarly produced records for the German market which were pressed with a label in Latin as '*Veni-Vidi-Vici*'.

That, as it was told us in our history lessons, meant, 'I Came, I Saw, I Conquered', and was a phrase allegedly spoken by Julius Caesar.

Perhaps the Beka company hoped to capture the bulk of the German records market with this new product which it put on sale in December 1909. At the Leipzig Trade Fair, in April 1910, the company stated that for the present, it had no intention of placing its four-tunes-a-side discs into the British market.

But production, as ENCORE RECORDS, was put in hand, and the discs arrived late in 1910 for an undiscovered concessionaire or exclusive dealer. The Beka Records Agency of London never mentioned the ENCORE RECORDS in their publicity and advertisements, and I have never seen them mentioned in any of the trade periodicals dealing with records. The discs themselves bore two sets of catalogue numbers (Serial Numbers) – one set began at 550, and the other at E.800. The 'E' prefix generally signified discs pressed for the British market.

As far as matrix numbers are concerned, sometimes the records bore a number which slotted in with the standard Beka Grand Records matrices and bore another number peculiar to the two-tunes-a-side format. It is also a fact that some discs have been collected where the Beka Grand Record style labels were used in lieu of Encore labels. The label's texts



were printed in gold. On one face, the background was in red for one title and blue for the other. On the reverses, a yellow background was used for one title, and green for the other.

The playing time for these 10" discs was only similar to standard size records.

Does any reader or Member know who sold these records?

**ENGLISH FOLK DANCE SOCIETY.** In early 1932, discs began to be recorded and pressed for this Society, which had been founded in 1911. Later in 1932, it combined with the English Folk Song Society, which had been founded much earlier – in 1898, in fact. The names were combined as The English Folk Dance & Song Society, whose headquarters were then, as now, at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, London, NW1.

The earliest records reveal that the two societies had not yet been joined, for they had been recorded in March by the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd., and had been given that company's 'Reference Numbers' in the 'RO'-prefixed series, a series it employed for private contract work. The matrices were in the standard 'CA'-prefixed series, as used on Columbia 10" discs.

The **ENGLISH FOLK DANCE SOCIETY** discs began at RO.51 and bore a logo of Morris Dancers' staves, within a circle, at the top of the labels.

**ENGLISH FOLK DANCE & SONG SOCIETY.** Some recordings were made for the combined society, after the 1939-45 war, by contracting businesses operating private recording services, such as Recorded Productions (London) Ltd., of 92 Regent Street, W1, whose

label bore a picture of Tower Bridge as its logo.



Figure 2. The label for the English Folk Dance & Song Society recording produced by RECORDED PRODUCTIONS (LONDON) LTD., of Morris House, Jermyn Street, SW1.

An associate label, the Herald Record, also carried recordings undertaken for the Society, both labels sharing in the 'RPL'-prefixed matrix series.



Figure 3. The label for the English Folk Dance & Song Society recording produced by HERALD RECORD, of 92 Regent Street, W1.

Recorded Productions were in existence in London by 1951, but they could have been operating in late 1950, and perhaps

earlier elsewhere? The company was no longer operative in London, for sure, by 1956.

**ENGLISH MUSIC SOCIETY** records. This Society was formed during 1935, probably with active sponsorship from the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd. Its avowed objective was to have recordings taken of great English musical works which had been composed during the fifteenth century up to modern times. But the music of Delius was to be excluded as that composer's works were already the province of The Delius Society.

There was no intention of having recordings made in chronological order of composition, but each proposed volume of discs would be devoted to one composer or period. The ultimate aim was to produce a series of volumes which, upon completion, would prove to be an invaluable and extensive library of English music.

In the event, only two volumes appear to have ever been produced.

The first volume, comprising five 12" and three 10" discs, with no automatic couplings, were devoted to Henry Purcell's compositions. Firstly, his Golden Sonata, with performers Isolde Menges and William Primrose, violins, accompanied on the harpsichord by John Tichehurst, and on the *viola da gamba* by Ambrose Gauntlett. Ten Fantasies, recorded by other artists, followed, and then three songs sung by Keith Falkner, and finally, two Catches, sung by The Purcell Singers. The recordings had been taken during September to November 1935. The records, made by Columbia were given catalogue numbers in the 'RO'- and 'ROX'-prefixed Reference Series, allocated according to size, and

with 'CA'- or 'CAX'-prefixed matrix numbers, accordingly. The encircled head of Purcell, in black and white, adorned the upper part of the labels printed brown on a cream background.



Figure 4. THE ENGLISH MUSIC SOCIETY label for the Henry Purcell set of recordings.

A second volume consisted of compositions by Sir Arnold Bax. It was not made available until May 1939, but was still available in February 1955. Some of the recordings had been made under his personal supervision as early as February and July 1937, with more in March 1938, and one re-recording taken in May 1939.

The various works were all accommodated on seven 12" discs, and were available also in the automatic couplings format.

**ENSA.** A brief mention should be made of the transcription recordings put out by ENSA, the Entertainments National Service Association. That organisation's discs were not sold to the public, but were specifically produced for radio broadcasting or for use in public address systems for the benefit of members of the British Armed Forces wherever they



happened to be in the world, serving their countries.

Some of the recordings were of domestic radio programmes broadcast by the BBC of London.

Our late lamented Member, Len Watts, had collected an ENSA disc, recorded by The Gramophone Co. Ltd., which had two hymns played by a Royal Air Force Band, with organ, they having been made specifically for radio-broadcasting to Prisoners of War.

There were at least seven different classifications of ENSA recordings, serving various factions within ENSA. Those series were labelled – O.R.B.S. Ensa Calling; O.R.B.S. Services Calling; O.R.B.S. Services Library; O.R.B.S. Forces Broadcasting Service; Services Calling; ENSA Calling; and ENSA Services Calling. The period in which these recordings were in use appears to be from 1941 into 1947.

**ERA.** A curiosity about this label is the fact that, in England, this was the registered trade mark of a watchmaker, William Robert Petty, of 'The Poplars', Bowes Road, New Southgate, Middlesex, as from October 1907. His registration was a cover for talking machines and disc records. With the label name was the associated depiction of a standing female shielding her eyes against the rays of a rising or setting sun. Such is my only known connection of Petty with the ERA records.

The New Polyphon Supply Co. Ltd., of 2 Newman Street, Oxford Street, London, W, (a company which had been founded in 1815, and which had recently absorbed the former businesses of Henry Klein & Co. and of Nicole Frères, Ltd.), on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1907, addressed a

Letter to the Trade, which read – 'Dear Sirs, A new disc called Era has just been introduced and we have taken the liberty of sending you a sample set, carriage paid. The record can be supplied either single- or double-sided at the following retail and trade prices. Retail - 10" single-sided @ 2s. each; double-sided @ 3s. each. Trade – single-sided @ 16s. 6d. per dozen, less 2½% discount; and double-sided @ 25s. per dozen, less 2½% discount.'

'The selection we send you are good sellers only and, as the record is one of the finest on the market both for volume and purity of tone, it is sure to make a hit. We have arranged to send out about one dozen of the latest recordings and we shall be pleased if you will allow us to enter your name on our list for these samples. – Yours faithfully – New Polyphon Supply Co. Ltd.'



Figure 5. The ERA record label.

Among the original lists of artists were –  
 Maria Titiens, Cecile Vicars,  
 Winifred Marwood, Henry Turnpenny,  
 Ian Colquhoun, Roland Cunningham,  
 Montague Borwell, Arthur Winkworth,  
 Leo Stormont, Whit Cunliffe,

Alf Gordon, Albert Whelan,  
 Pete Hampton, Ernest Shand,  
 Sgt. Charles Leggett, the Band of H. M.  
 Grenadier Guards, the Band of H. M.  
 Scots Guards, the Kaiser Franz  
 Grenadier-Garde-Regiment Band, and  
 the Orchester Peuppus of Munich.

Not only had those artists already been issued on Beka Grand Records, dating back to December 1905, but the ERA records bore the Beka catalogue numbers as well. They were known in the trade as 'stencilled' discs. As with the Encore Records, the ERA records were never mentioned at all in the trade periodicals.

Others who stocked them were Messrs. John G. Murdoch & Co. Ltd. and Barnett Samuel & Sons, Ltd., and, at the cut price of 2s. 4d. each, the double-sided ERAs could be had from Dawson Goodey, a trader in Highbury, North London.

An illustrated advertisement of Barnett Samuel & Sons Ltd., in a periodical of January 1908, for a revolving records display rack for shopkeepers, did show three ERA discs held in the rack.

Although Beka Records in London never advertised the ERA discs, in August 1908, in running a records exchange scheme of theirs for dealers, they did include ERAs among the labels they were willing to accept for an allowance against fresh purchases of Beka discs.

I have not found any connection of Petty with the stockists, The New Polyphon Supply Co. Ltd., nor have I with Barnett Samuel & Sons Ltd., nor with Beka Records, but in August 1920, Petty, as the trade mark owner, had a new address published in the Trade Marks Journal which showed that he was then at 59/61 Clerkenwell Road, London, EC, which

was also the address of the factors, John G. Murdoch & Co. Ltd.

In April 1921, upon its expiry, Petty renewed the trade mark, but it was not renewed again on expiry in 1935.

**ERA RECORD.** After the owners of the Era matrices, Beka Records, had been taken over by Carl Lindström A.G., their 12" diameter Beka Meister Records, in Germany, were terminated and replaced, in March 1911, by the new Parlophon. These were the first labels to bear the Lindström trade mark, which comprised a '£' (as the initial of Lindström) placed over the depiction of a table gramophone. This registered trade mark was also applied to later issues of Era records, but which were now styled ERA RECORD, the picture label showing the lady shielding her eyes whilst looking into the rays of the sun, having been dispensed with.

The new style label also showed that the ERA RECORD was still carrying the same catalogue numbers as the Beka Grand Records from whose matrices they were pressed. Both labels had been given catalogue numbers common to both sides once the single-sided discs had been terminated in 1909.

An example of the ERA record was single-sided no. 7703, of Arthur Winkworth, bass, singing Petrie's 'Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep'. The original issue, the Beka Grand Record 7703, had been on Beka Records first English list of December 1905, and had appeared on the original ERA list of November 1907.

**ESPERINST.** The full style of this label is 'GRAMOFONDISKO' placed above 'ESPERINST', so it may be that this label



should be placed among those beginning with 'G'.

The word 'Esperinst' is a contraction of the label's owner, the Esperanto Institute Ltd., which company was founded in 1926. This company's files, which used to be in Companies House, were destroyed in 1967, probably on orders from the Denning Committee, which was the body deciding upon the destruction or retention of company files at Companies House.

At the time that the recordings were taken in the Esperanto language by the Crystalate Manufacturing Co. Ltd. in 1926, and with William Ditcham as Crystalate's chief recording expert, the Institute's address was in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire.

A wide acceptance of the international Esperanto language had been the hope of its inventor, Dr. Zamenhof, an oculist of Warsaw, Poland. The language had been first introduced in 1887, and by 1921, the language was controlled by a committee of an Academy which had its headquarters in Paris, France. At that period, there were seventy Esperanto language periodicals in circulation, and Esperanto was recognised as a legitimate language by our own British General Post Office.

The headquarters of the language for the British Empire were at 17 Hart Street, London, WC., the address of The British Esperanto Association, Incorporated, of which the Esperanto Institute may have been a subsidiary, but on the other hand, may have had no connection with it at all?

The only disc I have seen was a 10" diameter, double-sided record, having dark blue and red printing on a light blue

background. The matrices were in the series being used for Crystalate's Imperial Records. There were no catalogue numbers on its labels.



Figure 6. The ESPERINST label of The Esperanto Institute Ltd.

The label illustrated in Figure 6, from matrix 4431, is of a song, 'Al La Fratoj', with a lyric by the founder of the language, Zamenhof. The music being by one Suda, the song is performed by Maurits Boeren.

**ETTLINGER DISCAL PICTURE POSTCARDS.** Max Ettlinger, of Max Ettlinger & Co. at 10 Long Acre, London WC., in March 1905, was reported as having produced a recording machine costing 5s. to buy. It was made of wood and aluminium, and had taken two years to develop. It was called 'The Discophone'. It was a patented device upon which one placed a thin, gelatinous, adhesive disc, and, to make a recording, one spoke or otherwise performed into the Discophone as soon as it was put into motion. The resultant recording, when taken off and stuck onto a picture postcard, could be addressed and sent through the post.

The recordings were reported to give a good volume of sound, and were said to be absolutely permanent. *Apropos* these diskettes, The Daily Express remarked that The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd., for several years had been making records to affix to postcards. They had not put these on the market, however, such artefacts being considered an unsuitable product for the company's public image!

Zonophon G.m.b.H., of Berlin, Deutsche Grammophon's agency for the International Zonophone Company's products, began advertising talking and singing postcards in the June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1905 edition of '*Phonographische Zeitschrift*'. In the following edition of June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1905, a series of '*Postkarten Schallplatte*', of 12 cards selling at 3 marks, were being advertised by the Berlin agency, known as M. Taubert & Co.

Bumb & Koenig, G.m.b.H., also of Berlin, began advertising their Picture Postcards with recordings, they having been granted a patent as protection for their product.

In a 'Phono Trader' advertisement of April 1905, it was stated that one Ettlinger Discophone was to be given, free, to any who ordered three gross of their picture postcards, i.e., 432 cards. It was also reported that a French Syndicate was to place similar postcards with sound recordings onto the French market.

Messrs. Ettlinger displayed their postcards at the Picture Postcard Exhibition, which was held in Earl's Court, London. A selection of twenty-four pre-recorded titles included the National Anthem, the 'Washington Post March', 'Valse Bleu', 'Home Sweet Home', 'Auld Lang Syne', 'Stop Yer

Tickling Jock', and 'Buying a House'. All were declared to be suitable for playing on any small disc machines which had a turntable disc clamping screw or device. The cards cost sixpence each. Ettlingers were still dealing at Long Acre in 1908.

In September 1905, a Mr. Edwin A. Denham, at 31 Barclay Street, New York City, was importing English musical and talking postcards, manufactured in London, which carried a 3½" transparent 'celluloid' disc.

**EXCELDA DOUBLE-SIDED RECORD.** The name EXCELDA was registered in March 1912 as a trade mark to Adelbert Bornand trading as a merchant at 170 Bishopsgate, London, EC., he having applied for his mark earlier, in January.



Figure 7. The EXCELDA label.

I know only of three EXCELDA discs, one being a stencilled disc of the new Winner Record Company of 1912, a James E. Hough Ltd. associated business, stencilled from Winner 2023. Another, EXCELDA 334 was a coupling of two matrices chosen from two different Winners, viz., 2027 & 2038.



EXCELDA 339 must have been a 10½" disc as its coupled matrices were from The Sound Recording Co. Ltd.'s matrices used for Grammavox Records A.44 and A.53.

A further example is given by Miss Venie Temple, singing 'See What Percy's Picked Up in the Park', stencilled from Winner 2206, but originally on Velvet Face Record 1243.

I do not know at what number EXCELDA began their catalogue numbering series, nor to what number they progressed, nor when the label was terminated. The labels were scarlet and white, printed in gold and red.

**EXCELOPHONE RECORD.** The name style on the labels was always printed in long-hand writing in gold, slanting upwards from left to right, on a purple label. 'EXCELOPHONE RECORD' was not registered as a trade mark in Britain, and neither did the words 'Trade Mark' appear on the labels as an unregistered mark.



Figure 8. The EXCELOPHONE RECORD label, displaying no catalogue number.

An EXCELOPHONE RECORD trade mark was registered in Australia, in October

1913, to the proprietorship of A. Macrow & Sons (Propriety) Ltd., but any direct connection between that overseas mark and the discs, which are my present subject, has not been found. I would have thought that 'Registered Trade Mark' would have appeared on the labels if the discs collected in England should have been Australia-bound.

A talking machine, 'The Excelophone', did have its brand name registered as a trade mark in England, with John G. Murdoch & Co. Ltd., of 91/93 Farringdon Road, London, EC., as the proprietor, which dates from February 1915. It had been applied for in April 1914, ten months earlier, which indicates that there had been some difficulty or interference, as a three month waiting period was the normal lapse between application and registration. As Murdoch's had a branch of its business in Australia, run by a member of the Murdoch family, it is possible that Murdoch's was responsible for supplying Macrow & Sons with 'Excelophone' branded goods. The record line was never advertised here in the trade periodicals, and as the onset of the war may have eventually prevented all exports to Australia (if that was the business that was being pursued) then an outlet for discs already pressed would be required in the home market. This is all conjecture.

Arthur Taylor, in his illustrated label book, does state that the EXCELOPHONE RECORDS were on the Australian market, through the activities of John G. Murdoch & Co. Ltd.

The highest numbered issue of EXCELOPHONE RECORDS, of which I am aware, bears recordings from 1915. All EXCELOPHONE RECORDS were stencilled

discs, generally with full labels pressed with the discs, although there were some with half-labels stuck over the extant commercial pressings with their source material.

The known sources to date, are Guardsman Records/Invicta Records, Polyphon Records and their succeeding Pilot Records – ‘Formerly Polyphon Record’, and The Winner records. Examples seen bore legends at the bottoms of the labels, such as ‘Made in England’, ‘Manufactured Throughout in England’, or ‘Pressed in Germany’. The latter were those pressed from Polyphon Records, and carried the English catalogue number for Polyphon Records, and must therefore have been pressed before the onset of the Great War in August 1914. Those which had the Invicta Record source were also of that period. The succeeding Guardsman Records, for a short period, relied on The Sound Recording Company Ltd. with pressings from its Grammavox Record’s masters, and some of those 10¼" diameter recordings are found on Excelophones. Catalogue numbers were in the low hundreds from The Invicta Record Co. source, although some are without catalogue numbers at all.

A ‘2000’ series was used for ‘The Winner’-derived discs, and the Polyphon source used the Polyphon Records’ own early English ‘8000’ catalogue series. I have yet to hear of any pressed from the later ‘5000’ catalogue series. An example of an un-numbered Excelophone Record is one by Robert Carr, baritone, singing Wilmot & Löhr’s ‘Little Grey Home in the West’, the source being Guardsman Record 450 of January 1915.

**EXO RECORDS and EXO DOUBLE-SIDED RECORDS.** (The EXO RECORDS were also double-side recorded). ‘Warranted Genuine British Manufacture’ these records were manufactured at the Edison Bell Works by J. E. Hough, Ltd., with the labels bearing the unregistered trade marks of Messrs. Moorhouse, Ltd., of Padiham, in Lancashire.

That Moorhouse company had been founded in December 1908 with a take-over of Mary Moorhouse’s business which had been engaged in bicycle manufacturing, dealing and repairing, and having a general factorship at the Wellington Mills, in Bible Street, Padiham. Her concern also dealt in engineering machinery and other products of the iron and steel industries, and were also repairers, cleaners and storers of automobiles, motor-cycles, and carriages.

Three other members of the Moorhouse family were subscribers to the setting up of Moorhouse, Ltd. in 1908. An invoice slip of April 1910 shows the business then had a property in Padiham called the Royal Windsor Works. Over the next decade, the business progressed for, by September 1918, the original £6000 of founding shares capital had been increased to £20,000, but fifteen years later, in November 1925, £13,000 had to be raised by way of a mortgage on the whole undertaking. Within a year, a Receiver and Manager were appointed upon an Order of a Court, from an application by The Manchester & County Bank, Ltd. The Receiver was discharged from his completed duties in June 1928, and the Company was officially dissolved by Notice in the London Gazette on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1932.





Figure 9. The EXO label, the property of Messrs. Moorhouse, Ltd., of Padiham, Lancs.

The first 200 EXO discs, with black and gold labels, were issued in December 1911, being stencilled records from the Edison Bell – Bell Disc Genuine Gramophone Records or the Edison Bell Velvet Face Records, the size of the discs therefore, being of 10¼" diameter. As the highest number known to me is on an EXO whose title would not have been available until August 1913, it is likely that The Winner records of The Winner Record Co. Ltd., (a J. E. Hough Ltd., associate) might also have been called upon to furnish matrices.

The EXO DOUBLE-SIDED RECORDS bore differently designed labels to the EXO records, and one I saw had some yellow as a part of their colour scheme.

The EXO records had catalogue numbers running from no. 1 to past 550, but there were other numbers prefixed with an 'A', 'C', or 'D', numbers within the '500' and '600' ranges. An example was the record of Robert Carr and Walter Pembroke, singing 'The Two Beggars', by Valdemar & H. Lane Wilson, on EXO

104, and derived from Velvet Face 1019, a December 1910 issue.

**EXPRESS & STAR.** A disc with a red, white and black label is known, with a white star dominating the background. The proprietor would appear to be a newspaper publishing firm located in Wolverhampton, Staffordshire.

Who pressed and recorded this disc I am unable to report. There were no Decca Record Co. tell-tale marks on the disc, which had matrix numbers of 189 and 190. If they had been prefixed 'CP', then a Crystalate product would have been indicated. Other potential manufacturers were The British Homophone Company, The Vocalion Gramophone Company, and the Edison Bell Works, depending on the disc's availability date.

The artist on each side was one whose recording career had begun well before the 1914-18 War. This was Harry Fay. One title was 'The Newspaper and Albert', which was a parody on the 'Ramsbottom Tale' called 'The Lion and Albert'. Stanley Holloway had recorded that monologue for Columbia records, and this was issued in the summer of 1932. This disc probably dates from around that time, that is, if Mr. Holloway made his recording soon after it had been written by Edgar. The parody was written by Messrs. Riley & Arrowsmith.

Fay's reverse title was 'It isn't New' (or 'News'), written by Milner & Riley.

Any further information about this label would be welcome.

*to be continued ...*

*See also 'postscript' from Frank Andrews on page 178 referring to the '88' record label, covered in issue no. 230.*

# Savoy Syncopation, part 2

## by Phil Bennett

During the 1926/27 period, there was a third group playing for dancing at the Savoy Hotel, the Sylvians under the leadership of Carroll Gibbons. Photographic evidence shows it to be a septet of two pianos (one played by Gibbons, the other by Frank Herbin), two violins (Ramon Newton and Reg Pursglove?), possibly Roy Whetstein and Al Notorange on reeds, with the following two members of the Orpheans – Bert Thomas on banjo, and Alec Ure on drums. An augmented version of the Sylvians recorded several sessions for HMV between October 1926 and December 1927, although the personnel was something of a moveable feast. The Sylvians would appear to have led a notionally separate existence although there was a certain degree of interchanging between the three dance bands.

During 1927 Wilfred de Mornys, who managed both the Savoy Havana Band and the Savoy Orpheans terminated his contractual arrangements with the hotel management. Exactly why this happened remains unclear, although there was certainly some form of disagreement. As a result the Orpheans and the Havana Band ceased to play at the Savoy Hotel at the end of December 1927. During the preceding six years both these two dance orchestras had made a significant contribution to the history of British popular music in general and, in particular, to the early days of British jazz. The American influence had been considerable as nearly twenty American

musicians had played with the combined groups during the early and mid-twenties.

Through their regular radio broadcasts and numerous recordings, modern syncopated dance music reached a wide audience both in Britain and its overseas dominions, as in India for instance, both Columbia and HMV had their own pressing facilities. During these years the Savoy Havana Band had 323 sides issued, the Sylvians 42, and the Savoy Orpheans a staggering 506 issued sides. This amounts to a monumental total of 871 issued recordings. In addition members of the bands also participated in sessions by other groups such as the various recording groups organised and directed by Bert and John Firman for Zonophone and Homochord. Herb Finney also led his own quintet of Savoy musicians which recorded four jazz orientated sides for Regal in 1924. There were also the three numbers recorded for HMV in January 1925 by the Boston Orchestra, an eight-piece group drawn from members of both the Savoy bands. Incidentally, one of the numbers recorded is the only British recording in the 1920s of 'Mama's Gone, Goodbye', an obscure jazz number from the pen of the New Orleans Creole band leader, Armand J. Piron (the HMV label spells his name 'Piros').

Not all the issued recordings by the Savoy bands are dance records, some are comedy records, selections from musical shows or selections such as the 'Savoy Christmas Medley'. However, most are



first class modern syncopated dance music easily as good as that played by the well-known bands in New York such as those of Paul Whiteman, Paul Specht, Ben Bernie, etc. Several of the recordings made by the Savoy bands are out-and-out jazz numbers, such as 'Static Strut', 'Stomp Off, Let's Go', 'Everybody Stomp', 'My Sweetie Went Away', 'Eccentric', 'Copenhagen', 'Hard Hearted Hannah', and 'Vladivostok'. One session by the Orpheans in May 1927 was listed as by the Savoy Hot Heads and produced four memorable sides - 'Sax Appeal', 'Snag It', 'Tampeekoe', and 'Windy City Stomp'. Although listed for issue and assigned catalogue numbers, the records were inexplicably withdrawn just prior to their release. Perhaps test pressings are still lurking in the EMI archives at Hayes and could yet be released - who knows?

Although no longer resident at the Savoy Hotel the two dance orchestras continued to work as groups. The Havana Band under the direction of Ramon Newton, recorded for the Broadcast label from September 1928 until April 1929. These discs were issued as being by the 'Original Havana Band, late of the Savoy Hotel, London'. The personnel included Jimmy Wornell on trumpet and Bernard Tipping on trombone, both of whom had been members of the Savoy Havana Band when it was directed by Reg Batten in 1925/26.

The Orpheans, still under the leadership of Carroll Gibbons went off on an European tour. In March they recorded several sides for Homochord in Berlin as the Original Savoy Orpheans (which of course they were not). Frank Guarente remained on trumpet along with Max Goldberg, while Tony Thorpe was still

on trombone. The reed section included the Belgian saxophonist Charles Remue, whose own New Stompers Orchestra had cut some of the hottest records ever made by an European band, for Edison Bell in London in 1927.

Another Savoy Orpheans group was playing in the Savoy Hotel in the late summer of 1929. Directed by Ben Evers, it included Max Goldberg on trumpet and Alec Ure on drums. It was not particularly successful although it made a few records for the short-lived Dominion label. In 1931, Carroll Gibbons formed his now famous Savoy Hotel Orpheans. This 'straight' dance orchestra was a commercial success and they remained the resident dance orchestra at the Savoy Hotel until after World War II.

However, we are getting ahead of ourselves and we must return to the ballroom of the Savoy Hotel in late 1927. The management of the hotel were becoming aware that, as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 1928, there would be no dance band to perform for the evening diners. Fortunately, through the good offices of a director of the Brunswick recording company, Count Anthony di Bosdari, the hotel management were introduced to a young pianist and bandleader, Fred Elizalde, who was given the opportunity to form a new dance orchestra for the hotel.

Fred (real name Federico) Elizalde, who was born in Manila in 1908 (some sources say 1907), was an American citizen and a classically trained musician who had developed an interest and a considerable ability in hot jazz. As heir to a considerable fortune, he had private means and thus was able to indulge himself with his love of playing jazz. In the summer of 1926, Fred, with his alto

saxophonist brother Manuel 'Lizz' Elizalde, had recorded a number of sides in Hollywood, with Fred's own Cinderella Roof Orchestra. A few months later Manuel had taken up a place at Cambridge University and brother Fred moved to England to join him.

Within a matter of months Fred (and to a lesser extent Lizz, who was encumbered by his studies) had established himself on the British dance band and jazz scene. In early 1927 he had formed a university jazz group, the Quinquaginta Ramblers, which in May of that year recorded for Brunswick as Fred Elizalde and his 'Varsity Band and the following month, for HMV as Fred Elizalde and his Cambridge Undergraduates. Certainly no British university has ever had a jazz group as good as that band – before or since.

In mid-summer 1927, Fred commenced recording regularly for Brunswick, his first sides being a series of technically advanced and sometimes introspective piano solos. A full band session followed in July, with a personnel which included several musicians 'borrowed' from the Ambrose Orchestra. (Fred had scored several arrangements for this group). One member was the American teenage trumpet 'star' of the period, Henry Levine. British-born Levine had seen the Original Dixieland Jazz Band playing in 1922, and when only 14 (in 1926) had played with the ODJB during the final months of that band's existence.

Having accepted the offer from the Savoy Hotel management to establish what became Fred Elizalde and His Savoy Music, the leader obtained the services of three of the leading musicians on the New York jazz scene. All of them

were the foremost members of the California Ramblers and its associated groups, such as The Goofus Five. For the trumpet chair, Elizalde selected Chelsea Quealey, and on clarinet and saxophones was Bobby Davis. The third ex-Rambler was perhaps the most notable of the trio – the master of the bass saxophone, Adrian Rollini, who also brought along his xylophone and vibraphone as well as his two speciality instruments, the goofus and the hot fountain pen.

As well as playing with the California Ramblers and their various spin-off groups, Rollini had also been the leader of the band at the new Club New Yorker in September 1927. It was this group, which included (among others) Bobby Davis on saxophone as well as the legendary Bix Beiderbecke on cornet, Frankie Trumbauer on C-melody saxophone, guitarist Eddie Lang and Joe Venuti on violin, that made some memorable records for OKeh in September and October 1927 under the nominal leadership of Frankie Trumbauer. In October 1927, Rollini had also participated in two of the recording sessions by Bix Beiderbecke and His Gang. All these records were issued in Britain by Parlophone and as a result, the names of Adrian Rollini and Bobby Davis were not unknown to the growing number of British jazz enthusiasts. Furthermore, Fred Elizalde was also writing a series of articles for the new weekly paper, the Melody Maker, which catered entirely for dance band musicians and the non-playing connoisseurs of their music. Through these articles, the names of Louis Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson and Bix Beiderbecke (spelt Bidlebeck in his first article) were brought to the attention of the readership.



So, having helped create a climate of appreciation for jazz among the dance band enthusiasts, Fred Elizalde introduced his new orchestra to the wealthier members of London society who could afford to patronise the Savoy Hotel. It is doubtful if any of the diners/dancers who were present at the band's *début* on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1928 had ever read the *Melody Maker*. Some of the 'bright young things' or the 'flappers' on the dance floor may have purchased records by the California Ramblers, the Goofus Five or Frankie Trumbauer's Orchestra but whether they associated those records with the musicians on the band stand is very much open to question.

That Fred Elizalde and his Music was undoubtedly the best jazz-influenced dance orchestra ever to play in any London hotel is undeniable. There were of course, other excellent hot groups in London at various times in the 1920s, such as the Paul Whiteman Orchestra (in 1923 and 1926) and the black groups like The Plantation Orchestra (who were featured in the revue 'Blackbirds' in 1926/7) and the Noble Sissle Orchestra, but of the hot jazz-influenced groups only the Elizalde outfit had a long term residency. Fred Elizalde and his Music made a number of records for Brunswick (and two sides for Parlophone), although their recorded output is tiny when compared to that of the Savoy Orpheans or the Savoy Havana Band. Perhaps it was that their somewhat advanced musical sophistication made them less appealing to the general public.

There is some indication of this general lack of appeal in that, although the orchestra made a number of broadcasts for the BBC, the regular broadcasts only

lasted a few weeks. It is said that the BBC received a large number of complaints from the listening public (possibly a vociferous minority) but it must be remembered that this was in an era when BBC announcers pronounced the word 'jazz' as if its very utterance caused an obnoxious smell. The reality is that many of the instrumentalists, both British and American, in the Fred Elizalde orchestra were at the cutting edge of jazz development in the 1920s. The recordings by the small group (issued as by Fred Elizalde and his Hot Music) are every bit as good as those recorded by the Goofus Five. The Hot Music comprised Quealey, Davis, Rollini, Elizalde, Len Fillis on guitar, and Ronnie Gubertini on drums, and their records are now highly prized collectors' items. For some curious reason the Hot Music were always featured at the hotel's 5.00 p.m. tea dances when Fred was wont to try out his new arrangements.

When the small group recording of 'Tiger Rag' was issued on Brunswick 147, the company held a competition in which listeners had to identify how drummer Ronnie Gubertini (ex-Savoy Havana and Orpheans) achieved his 'slapping' effect. Only three entrants had correct answers. As Gubertini achieved this sound by 'drumming' on newspapers covering an overcoat, this is hardly surprising. However, how many of the record-buying general public knew the answer, or for that matter cared is somewhat conjectural. The truth is that Fred Elizalde and His Music failed to capture the public's imagination in the same way that the Orpheans and Havana Band had done only a year or so previously. Fifty years later people, who

had been in their 'teens in the mid-1920s would cheerfully recall their enjoyment of the Orpheans broadcasts but very few would even remember the name of Fred Elizalde.

In 1929 Fred Elizalde enlarged the orchestra quite considerably and among the new additions were another ex-California Ramblers reed player and one of New York's busiest session men – Fud Livingston, and Adrian Rollini's brother, Arthur, on tenor saxophone. Al Bowlly replaced Len Fillis, but as far as can be ascertained was not employed as a vocalist. It was this nineteen-piece group that recorded one side – 'Singapore Sorrow' – for Parlophone in April 1929. The reverse side – 'Nobody's Sweetheart' – was by a ten-piece group drawn from the main orchestra.

The BBC broadcasts by the Elizalde group finally came to an end in March 1929 and at the end of July 1929 the Elizalde Orchestra ceased to play at the Savoy Hotel. Chelsea Quealey and the Rollini brothers had returned to America, although Bobby Davis remained in London until the spring of 1930. Elizalde himself stayed on in London, undertaking a provincial tour of the UK with his orchestra in September – sadly a commercial disaster. He was away in the Philippines in 1930 and he moved to Spain in 1933, where he studied

composition under Manuel de Falla. In later years he wrote an opera and several concerti. Ultimately, he became President of the Manila Broadcasting Company and died in Manila in 1979.

The 1920s were over – the Great Depression was beginning. The era of syncopated hot dance music at London's Savoy Hotel was at an end. All over the capital the sound of dance music had changed – straight, sweet dance bands playing strict tempo music were in favour. As previously mentioned, Carroll Gibbons was king of the Savoy ballroom; Henry Hall and the BBC Dance Orchestra were the listeners' favourites on the wireless and not until later in the decade would 'Swing' awaken the sounds of syncopated dance music. ■

#### Acknowledgements.

The foregoing article and its title was inspired by a draft manuscript prepared by former CLPGS member Mark Morgan, to whom due acknowledgement is hereby gratefully given.

The following reference works have also been consulted:-

Jazz Records, 1897-1942  
British Dance Bands  
Rhythm On Record  
Don't Jazz – It's Music  
Jazz in Britain  
Storyville Magazine, nos. 33 & 36  
Jazz Monthly, December 1966 issue  
The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music.

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# Pathé in Trouble

## by Bill Dean-Myatt

Whilst looking through the indices of 'The Glasgow Herald', my eye was caught by the name 'Pathé', and upon finding the edition of 27<sup>th</sup> March 1923, this interesting court case was revealed.

The headlines said –

'LADY SINGER'S ACTION – ALLEGED  
LIBELLOUS GRAMOPHONE RECORDS –  
CONSEQUENCE OF "GLASGOW HERALD"  
CRITICISM'.

It appears that in 1919 [*Author's note – I think this date must be wrong and should be 1909.*], the contralto Phyllis Lett, of Norfolk Road, St. John's Wood, cut sixteen sides for the Pathé Frères' Pathéphone of Budge Row, London, EC, including the songs, 'The Rosary' and 'Ombre Mai Fu'. Sir Edward Marshall Hall, KC, appearing for Miss Lett, told the court that the process was for the singer to sing songs that were recorded onto a wax cylinder. When it became necessary, the performance was transferred onto disc records. The Pathéphone, which was made by the company, did not use an ordinary needle and in that respect was unique. It used a sapphire point, and the sound was reproduced from the centre rather than from the outer edge, as with all other makes of gramophone records. The penalty the Pathé company had to pay was that their discs were not interchangeable. They had now got a record that was printed [sic] in the same way as other records.

It was the custom, said Counsel, that when provincial management wanted to

engage a singer, they frequently bought a record of that performer and on the basis of that performance decided whether or not to employ them. Counsel said that the original records were not bad records, and when stocks were exhausted in 1916, the Pathé company did something which, upon reflection, they should not have done, at any rate without notice, and which was calculated to work a very grave injustice upon Miss Lett.

Defendants published new catalogues from time to time and a recent catalogue had stated that 'new records by Miss Phyllis Lett singing 'The Rosary' and 'Ombre Mai Fu' with an orchestral accompaniment were now available'. Counsel said that this was where the libel came in. Evidence would be called to show that these records were 'something terrible'. There must have been some mechanical process that had changed the character of the records by introducing an orchestral accompaniment. The records seemed to be reproductions from reproductions and something had been done that had destroyed the lady's voice. Samples had been sent to the trade and also for the press to review, and it was in consequence of a criticism that appeared in 'The Glasgow Herald' that the action had arisen.

Mr. Blanco White [*author's note – yes, that's his real name!*] for Pathé said that there had been no substitution, the records were actually the same as they had been before, with orchestral accompaniment. Marshall Hall produced the original record that stated 'with piano

accompaniment'. Mr. White said that that must have been a printer's error.

Percy Gordon, B.Mus., music critic of 'The Glasgow Herald', said that in his review of 27<sup>th</sup> January, he thought his criticism was lenient. He could have said more but, as he knew Miss Lett as a singer, he thought he would be a little diffident about the matter. When he and a friend played the record, they laughed because the voice was so raucous. In his opinion, the records would have a damaging effect on Miss Lett's career.

Various witnesses, including Sir Landon Ronald, Sir Edward Elgar and Carrie Tubb, were called to confirm how bad the records were. Elgar said it was a wretched noise and he did not recognise it as the human voice.

Miss Lett said, in evidence, that she was paid a fee of 5gns. per record and that they had a piano accompaniment only *[author's note – in fact, at least two had accompaniment by an organ.]*

The Judge thought they should adjourn for the day and he would listen to the

records in question, probably in the morning when he would be better able to stand them.

In the upshot, a mutually agreeable settlement was reached, Pathé paying undisclosed damages and the costs of the case. Marshall Hall said he now wondered whether the case should have been one of slander rather than libel. Defendants would destroy all stocks of the record and had given an undertaking that future reproductions would bear the date on which the songs were sung.

I do not know whether this last undertaking was ever carried out for Miss Lett's records or for those of any other artist. As far as I know it wasn't, and I wish it had been made compulsory for all re-issues to carry the original recording or issue date. This 'interesting and important' case gives an insight into how the industry worked, the rôle of the gramophone record in producing work for an artist, and of an early attempt to deceive the public, which unfortunately, as we readers know, was not the last. ■

## REGIONAL GROUP SECRETARIES

### Clockwork Music Group

H. P. Bailey; [REDACTED] Whickham, Tyne and Wear; NE16 4ES.

### Midlands Group

Phil Bennett; [REDACTED] Whitmore Reans, WOLVERHAMPTON; WV6 0JW.

Tel: [REDACTED]

### Northern Group

John Astin; [REDACTED] Bilton, HARROGATE; HG1 3LL.

Tel: [REDACTED]

Or contact Alston Hall Residential College, Alston Lane, Longridge, PRESTON; PR3 3BP.

Tel: [REDACTED]

### West of England Group

Paul Morris; [REDACTED] EXETER; EX4 4HE.

Tel: [REDACTED]



# A Case of Cylinders, no.5

## by Michael Hegarty

This time I am going to 'play' a Sterling cylinder. I do not have a lot of these but the ones I have are prized! It is the old Irish song, 'The Old Plaid Shawl', issued in May 1905, sung by Mr. J. C. Doyle, no. 120. The Sterling Company issued several Irish pieces, and visited Dublin to record at the Feis Ceoil on occasions.

John C. Doyle, the Dublin-born baritone was much in demand by the early recording industry in London. He sang for G & T, Sterling, Edison Bell, Pathé, and Columbia. He had won the Gold Medal in the Feis Ceoil in 1899. As a concert singer he toured extensively. One of the most notable of his British engagements was at the Hotel Cecil, London, when a banquet was given to Du Gros in connection with the Pneumatic Tyre majority, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1909. On the 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1904, he appeared with John McCormack and James Joyce in the Antient Concert Rooms in Brunswick Street, Dublin.

When James Joyce wrote 'Ulysses', his central character, Leopold Bloom brags that his wife is to go on tour with 'all Topnobbers, J. C. Doyle and John McCormack, the best in fact'. Come to think of it, while on 'Bloomsday' people in the city dress up and whatever, I cannot recall a J. C. Doyle record on the air waves!

However, Doyle's voice was one of those featured on the inauguration of Dublin Radio (2RN) on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1926. He died on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1939, sixty-one years ago. ■



M<sup>R</sup> J. C. DOYLE

THE DARLING OF THE IRISH CONCERT PLATFORM

# Another Visit to Australia

## by Ernie Bayly

Following mainly the same itinerary as previously, perhaps our editorial group will permit me to make this a pictorial tour showing you collectors who would I'm sure entertain CLPGS Members as magnanimously as I was ... so much so that it almost needed a posse of police to force me into the Singapore Airlines 737 in Perth to start my homeward journey.

In Tasmania, I spent the Christmas period with Philip Archer in Launceston. Afterwards, we went to Hobart for the New Year, which we saw in among crowds on the Quayside with fireworks and singing. Don Taylor collected me from the Brunswick Hotel to spend an afternoon and until late evening, looking at/hearing many of the rare and unusual records that he has.

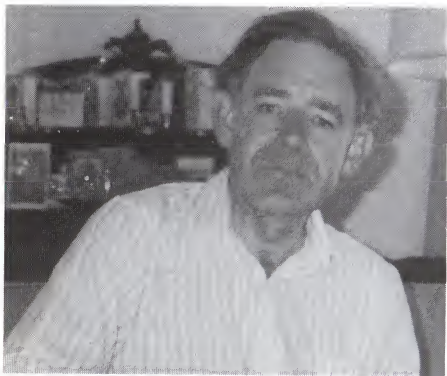


Figure 1. Don Taylor, of Hobart, Tasmania.

A strike of Ansett Airways staff robbed me of a few days from my visit to Michael and Janine Kinnear in Melbourne. They are computer wizards and forever compiling catalogues and histories of records which will surprise

you when published (one hopes in the near future). Michael has joined Frank Andrews and I in compiling a listing of the 'International Zonophone' records up to June 1903. Michael has become chief typist for this and the size of the catalogue will surprise you, and show why that company was a positive threat to the infant Gramophone Company.



Figure 2. Michael and Janine Kinnear, of Melbourne, Victoria.

In Melbourne, I met again Eric Brown (no photo) and others of the jazz music/record fraternity – including Neville Sherburn, proprietor of Swaggie Records.

Also in Melbourne (as well as riding the tramways!!), I met Frank van Straten, who has attended our meetings in London, and Paul Burke and Steve Rattle. The latter being the only one of us young enough to be still employed, he chose the swanky Schwobs sandwich bar on the corner of St. Kilda and Toorak roads as our rendezvous for his extended lunch break. All are collectors of 78s and



cylinders and like Music Hall, including Billy Williams. Paul had a photo of Billy enlarged and tinted which he brought to the meeting. Jillian McDougall of Schwobs graciously photographed us together.



Figure 3. From left to right, Ernie Bayly, Frank van Straten, Paul Burke (with the Billy Williams portrait), and Steve Rattle, in Melbourne.

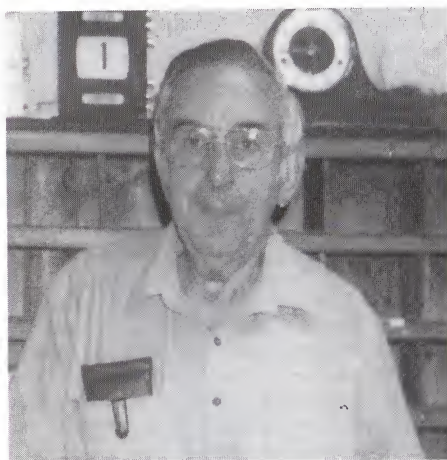


Figure 4. Colin Gracie, postmaster at Cavendish, western Victoria.

In the rural 'outback' at Cavendish (western Victoria), Colin Gracie presides over the little post office and its deliveries around a wide area. He looks serious for I caught him during his duties. He collects ancient manual telephone exchange equipment as well as talking machines. He took me for rides around the (then) parched neighbour-

hood, which included bending a bumper when we collided with a kangaroo which suddenly sprang from bushes in front of us near Hall's Gap in the Grampian Mountains.

Distances being great, I elected to fly from Mount Gambier to move on to cousins in Adelaide in a 2-seater plane that looked like a toy when landing among Jumbos (NOT records) at Adelaide. My stay there was sufficiently long to cover the February meeting of the Phonograph Society of South Australia, which was dedicated as a 'Zonophone Evening'. Among records and machines on display were THREE 'Cecils'. Not wishing to pre-empt what Geoff Dunkley and Barry Payne had planned I spoke for a short while on 'International Zonophone' (when called upon to say a few words at short notice). A few days later, Ern and Helen Taylor collected me and took me to their very rural home away south of Adelaide, near Goolwa, to view Ern's machines and enjoy Helen's cooking.



Figure 5. Ern and Helen Taylor, from South Australia.

From there, I flew into (for me) the unknown land of Perth. This town is literally hundreds of miles from anywhere. But the reception I had from collectors Richard Rennie, Rodney

House, Steve Austen and their families soon made it familiar territory. Richard and Rodney drove me around the area of Perth with its contrasting arid land and forested hills. Sadly, I missed a meeting of the Society there by only two days ... an error I'll not commit again!! These three gents are machine collectors and restorers, Rodney being particularly clever.



Figure 6. Steve Austen and Richard Rennie, of Perth, WA [For our American readers, that's Western Australia!]



Figure 7. Rodney House, also of Perth, WA.

From leaving Britain in mid-January, to landing on a cold, dreary morning at Heathrow in March from Penang and Singapore, I had experienced average temperatures of around 80°F ... matching the warmth of kindly receptions I had everywhere. ■

### Phonograph Society of South Australia

An organisation of enthusiasts interested in the collection and preservation of the artifacts of sound recording and reproduction, and research into their evolution. The PSSA NEWSLETTER, containing interesting articles and news, appears eleven times a year. Relevant books and reprints are also sold. Annual dues (Australian currency): New Zealand, Asia & South Pacific, \$28; Rest of the World, \$32. We take VISA and MASTERCARD. Write to:

The Secretary, PSSA, PO Box 235, Kent Town, S.A. 5071, Australia.

Phone & Fax: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED] >

### The Phonograph Society of N.S.W. Inc.

(founded 1973)

For those interested in the historical aspects of recorded sound. A quarterly journal, THE SOUND RECORD, of approximately 40 pages (A5 size) is published and various books, cassettes and other items are available to members at attractive prices. Annual subscription: \$A25, both Australia and Overseas Airmail.. Enquiries to -

Barry Badham, [REDACTED] Pymble 2073; Australia

## Federation of Recorded Music Societies Ltd. Notice of Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Venue – The Durham Light Infantry Museum and Art Gallery, Durham

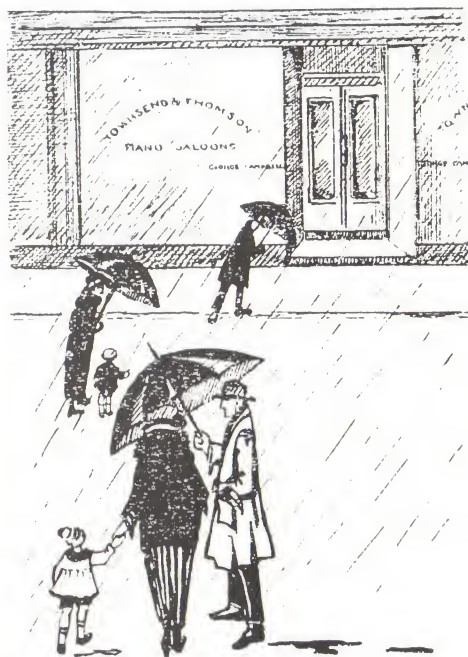
Further details from the Minutes Secretary, Tom Little



# The Walrus and the Carpenter in Record Land

by C. Stuart Burgon

*The following piece has been sent to us by Member Charles Stopani, of Aberdeen, who discovered it recently. The ode, as you will gather, owes more than a little to Lewis Carroll's famous poem, and, here and there, appropriately enough, a debt to the William McGonagall School of Scansion! It is a paean to the services of Messrs. Townsend & Thomson, erstwhile record dealers on George Street, Edinburgh. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did.*



THE day was drawing to a close,  
Drawing with all its might ;  
People were wondering what to do,  
To enjoy the wintry night,  
When someone said, "I know what  
Is the thing to make us bright."

The people shouted out with glee,  
"Pray, tell us where you've been."  
The fog is thick, the rain is wet,  
And the streets aren't very clean.  
"Tell us what we want to know,  
Or we'll think you very mean."

"Follow me," then someone said,  
"And don't be very long,"  
"I'm going to George Street, Seventy-Nine,  
To hear the latest song.  
Townsend & Thomson have a stock,  
And their sales are going strong."



THE Walrus and the Carpenter  
Mingled with the crowd,  
They smiled like anything to hear  
A Gramophone, then they laughed aloud.  
"If this were only taken home,"  
They said, "the children would be  
proud."

"If seven Records with seven songs  
Were played for a little while,  
Do you suppose," the Walrus said,  
"The people wouldn't smile?"  
"I doubt it," said the Carpenter,  
As they walked another mile.

"We must go back to the Gramophone,"  
The Walrus did beseech,  
"Townsend & Thomson know us now,  
They will show us one of each—  
'Columbia,' 'Apollo,' 'His Master's Voice,'  
At a price within our reach."



FOUR Records came up one by one,  
All eager to be tried;  
They left their covers in a row,  
And did their work with pride—  
And that was odd, because  
They had a song on either side.

Four other Records followed them,  
And yet another four;  
Thick and fast they came at last,  
And more, and more, and more—  
All so round and full of tone,  
A crowd stood at the door.

Townsend & Thomson, as you know,  
Are famous for their wares,  
At George Street, number Seventy-Nine;  
You're asked to sit in comfy chairs,  
While the latest Gramophone will play  
Your favourite Operatic Airs.





"IT seems a shame," the Walrus said,  
 "To see them sold so fast;  
 There won't be any left, you know,  
 For those who come the last!"  
 The Carpenter said nothing but  
 "The time has quickly passed."

"The time has come," the Walrus said,  
 "To talk of many things—  
 Of songs, and music, banjo strings—  
 A Gramophone that sings—  
 And Service in a Music Store,  
 And the custom that it brings."

"O people!" said the Carpenter,  
 "Townsend & Thomson serve you well,  
 At George Street, number Seventy-Nine,  
 Your happiness they swell,  
 And this is scarcely odd, because  
 They have the best to sell."

*C. Stuart Burgeon.*

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# **Review – A Balmain Gramophone at Phonofair 2000 - (... Continued from following page)**

Tests with a strong cardboard box showed that the ceiling would make a good reflector and careful adjustment of the positioning of the reflector from the horn mouth would enhance the sound as against that where no reflector was used. If the horn is vertical, then too, must be the record. Pressure of the soundbox on the record must then be by counterpoise or spring. To accommodate the movement of the soundbox across the record, a telescopic section must be fitted to the horn. An airtight seal can be secured by grease, but

highly polished close fitting tubes will save this potentially messy grease arrangement, albeit at some extra cost. A pair of springs will be needed, or better but dearer, a weighted counterpoise to compensate for the weight of the soundbox. The remaining extra to be provided is a clamp to hold the record in place, such as is normal practice in the recording studio.

I believe Peter Heath is to be most heartily congratulated in bringing Balmain principles into realisation, and can only hope that it will not be too long before a practical version of his work will go on sale. ■

**Ivor Abelson**

# Review

## A Balmain Gramophone at Phonofair 2000

I do not normally attend events such as the Phonofair, as I seldom see anything of interest to me. However, this time I was advised that a modern version of Balmain's gramophone would be there to be heard, and this was something I could not resist going to see and hear. Be sure it was well worth hearing. Superb!

Balmain believed that the bends in the passageway from the soundbox and in the horn were greatly destructive of sound quality. He therefore devised a system with a straight horn moving on a carriage running on rails. As the needle tracked the record on a true radius, so the horn was free to move. On electrically recorded 78s, the sound quality was superb, better than anything I had heard hitherto. It was as good as you would expect at a live performance - vocals, instrumental soloists and the full orchestra, with the impact on and the involvement of the listener as in a live performance. 'Sensational' is not too strong a word!

Acoustic vocals did not come over very well, and for these, the EMG Mark 4 remains my favourite.

It is noteworthy that Stanley Kelly (the ribbon speaker man) and Paul Voigt (the horn loudspeaker pioneer) both called for straight horns. For his theatre horns, Voigt had no problem - there was ample room for a straight horn. For his domestic horn, Voigt disposed this vertically, with a reflector at the top to direct the sound into the room. Voigt utterly rejected the folded horns but when Voigt's business was taken over by Lowther, came the Chave designs for folded horns. The ultimate in folding of the horn is to be found in the HMV re-entrants.

In view of Stanley Kelly's opposition to a curved horn, I raised the question of his

designs for EMG and later for Expert Gramophones, with Percy Wilson. He spoke of 'commercial reality'. Unless a horn was curved, and too, the sound had to pass through two right angles in the tone arm, you would have an unsaleable machine. He pointed out that the horns he designed for Expert had less curve than those he did for EMG. The absence of the curve made the horn less elegant, but the straighter format of the Expert horn improved the sound of the Expert over the EMG. Yet, whilst admitting the curves and bends caused degradation, Wilson did not regard it as all that serious.

What I heard at Phonofair 2000 convinced me that Balmain, Kelly and Voigt were right and Wilson was wrong when he said the ill-effects of curves and bends in the horn were not seriously harmful. This is not to say that Wilson was not right commercially, as indeed were all the gramophone makers who shaped their horns to suit the demands of the market.

This Balmain horn gramophone had not reached its final development. As presented, the tracking was incorrect, as was pointed out by Howard Hope, but this was not a difficult matter to put right.

The soundbox used was one of the EMI no. 5 series, but possibly a Columbia no. 24 might suit better, so as to enable acoustic records to be better reproduced. The spring wound motor was satisfactory at the start of the session, but towards mid-afternoon it began to tire. An electric motor is the answer here.

The real problem is to make the straight horn feasible in the normal room in a family home, as against a studio. The obvious first step is to follow Voigt and make the horn vertical.

*...continued on preceding page*



# Book Review

## Old Gramophones, by Ben Bergonzi

### Shire Album no. 260

*This is the third reprint of this delightful little booklet. It was first published in 1991, and reviewed in HILLDALE NEWS, no. 180, of June 1991, by George Frow. George's review is reprinted here for new Members and for those who may not have kept their back issues of the magazine.*

**Old Gramophones;** by Benet Bergonzi. 32pp, illustrated (b/w). No. 260 of the Shire series on antiques and collecting, published by Shire Publications Ltd., Cromwell House, Church Street, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire; HP27 9AA. UK cost - £2.95, plus postage. (ISBN 0-7478-0104-5).

It is some years since a booklet with a compressed history of machine collecting has been published. V. K. Chew's excellent 'Talking Machines' was and is for the converted, and Christopher Proudfoot's well-known collecting manual is long out of print. Here we have a brief history for those who visit our museums and historic buildings and browse through the racks of guides and cards in the lobby or gift shop, where the Shire series of booklets are normally to be seen on sale.

Benet Bergonzi is the curator of sound reproduction at The National Sound Archive - and regular visitor to London meetings - and he has brought fresh and welcome aspects to a subject that has already been well-served with literature and fine photography. Several of the machines in the excellent photographs have not been seen before, and I cannot recall a chart of

Gramophone Company soundboxes since Wilson and Webb's famous work of 1929.

By being economic in his writing, Benet Bergonzi has here condensed a great deal of information into one volume that would be invaluable to someone coming to the subject as a hobby, or who had just discovered Granny's gramophone in the attic (should any such items be still undiscovered), and there are plenty of grains of knowledge for the average collector in these pages. The 60 or so illustrations are captioned liberally and there a couple of pages given over at the end to tips on running old talking machines, other books on the subject, and some recommended collections and museums in Great Britain, Holland and America. A useful little book that will deservedly do well.

**George Frow**

There is little I can add to the above review - just to mention a few of the photographs that are not common in other publications, e.g., the Greenhill spring motor on page 9, the Edison Bell Picturegram and World Record Controller set up on page 23, etc. This is an excellent little publication for beginners and quick reference for those like me who have forgotten what we once read. If you do not have it on your shelf, now is the time to obtain it. Available from the CLPGS Bookshop.

**Richard E. Taylor**

# Book Review

## American Record Labels and Companies An Encyclopaedia (1891-1943)

This book by Allan Sutton and Kurt Nauck has just been published by Mainstream Press and is the sequel to Allan Sutton's book *Directory of American Disc Record Brands and Manufacturers* which was published in 1994. The main drawback to that book was that it had no illustrations of the records. This omission has been rectified with this new book. The cost of printing in full colour would make the cost of the book prohibitive for the average collector. The authors have got round this problem in a novel fashion. All the label illustrations have been put on a CD-ROM, which is held in a folder on the inside back cover of the book.

This CD-ROM contains over 1000 illustrations of American record labels in full colour. Once in the Label Catalogue the viewer is shown all the illustrations in thumbnail format. To get a full view of a label, all the viewer needs to do is click on to the thumbnail picture of the chosen label and the picture comes up full-size. To go to another picture the viewer clicks the cross at the top right-hand corner of the full-size illustration and the picture disappears, revealing once more the thumbnail gallery, from which the viewer chooses another sketch from the thumbnail gallery and goes through the same procedure again. The process is simple to operate and easy to follow. Full easy-to-follow instructions are given to operate the system. One can spend hours just browsing through this fascinating gallery. Kurt Nauck, who is a Member of our Society, and Allan Sutton have done the collector of 78s an invaluable service in producing such a CD-ROM and in publishing the book.

The accompanying 418-page book gives a short history of the American disc record industry, followed by the American Record Label and Companies Encyclopaedia (1891-1943). Part 1 of this describes the labels. Part 2 describes the record companies, and details their offices, pressing plants, the labels they issued and, where applicable, the foreign companies that used their masters. The appendices list Children's Labels, Phantom Labels, and Corporate Genealogies. There is a vast amount of information to be found in these pages from which the collector can learn a lot about the American Record Industry before the last war. For instance, I've had a couple of Nation's Forum 78s for some years but have not known the origin of them, except that the matrices were made by the Columbia Graphophone Company. From reading this book I learnt that the Nation's Forum project was launched in 1918 by a St. Louis attorney called Guy Golterman to record notable public figures. Such well-known figures as Calvin Coolidge, Warren G. Harding, Henry Cabot Lodge and Franklin D. Roosevelt made recordings for this label.

All in all this book with its CD-ROM is a first-class publication and is an absolute must for the serious record collector. I can recommend it thoroughly to all our readers.

***American Record Labels and Companies – An Encyclopaedia (1891-1943)*** by Allan Sutton and Kurt Nauck, ISBN 0-9671819-0-9, costs **\$64-95 plus postage**, and is available direct from Kurt Nauck at [redacted] Spring, Texas 77389-3643, USA. E-mail - [redacted] >. Website - <www.78rpm.com>.

**Chris Hamilton**



# Reports

## London; 20<sup>th</sup> June 2000

On Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> June at the Swedenborg Institute, before a large gathering of London members including the CLPGS Chairman, Howard Hope, Dominic Combe presented his programme, '**Perambulations Through Europe**', a musical tour of the continent on phonograph cylinders, with 'transport' being provided by Edison Triumph and Concert machines.

The tour started in England with Yolande Noble on Edison Bell 20099 asking 'Who Would Like to Pay for My Holiday?' and the Garde Republicaine taking us over the Channel with a descriptive *galop*, 'Orient Express', on Blue Amberol 27048. On reaching France, Alexis Boyer gave a hit song, '*Ces Envoyés du Paradis*', from *La Mascotte*, a popular operetta which ran for over two years in Paris from 1880. Then Mme Rollini of the *Folies Bergères* told us that '*Je suis pocharde*' – 'I am Tipsy' – on Blue Amberol 17798.

Moving into Spain, Dominic played two fascinating Blue Amberols, a *zarzuela* song, '*El amigo del Alma*' sung by Saturnino Navarro on 22361, followed by a truly astonishing song of love and death, '*Fandangos de Malaga*', composed, sung (and played on the guitar?) by the composer Rafael Bezarez, on 22089. Belgium provided us with a saucy number, '*Elle est de Bruxelles*' on 27160, and Germany was represented by an arrangement of '*Die Lorelei*', played by the American Standard Orchestra on 2541.

Switzerland was represented by a German language ballad, '*Luegit von Berg und Tal*', sung by Fritz Zimmermann on 4008, and Italy gave us '*A Ricciulella*' on 22425, sung by Francesco Daddi (who created the rôle of Beppo in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*), and a tarantella dance '*Tarantella Siciliana*', played by The Three Vagrants on 4187. Through Italy and on to Bavaria with '*Bayerisches*

*Laendler Potpourri*', being a selection of rural waltz-type dances on 26090, and '*Deh, Vieni, Non Tardar!*' from Mozart's 'Marriage of Figaro' on 29052, beautifully sung by Marie Tiffany. Austria was evoked by the 'Josephine Polka', performed in traditional style by the Oberammergauer Zither Trio on 2679, and an authentic-sounding (for Edison) performance of Strauss' 'Tales From the Vienna Woods', played by Bohumir Kryl's Band on 9863.

Nearing the end of our European journey, we entered Hungary with '*Herje Kati*', a popular concert piece in the Hungarian style played by the Moss Squire Celeste Orchestra on 23231, and finally, we reached journey's end at the very edge of Europe with '*Fatima, Teurkisches Intermezzo*', played by the Johann Strauss Orchestra on 16187.

This was a wonderful evening, presented with great aplomb by Dominic, with his usual style of wit and thorough research, assisted by his two beautifully maintained phonographs.

**Tim Wood-Woolley**

## London; 18<sup>th</sup> July 2000

The London meeting, held on the 18<sup>th</sup> July at the Swedenborg Centre, was another of the very popular 'Hen's Teeth' Members' Night programmes, where rare, interesting, unusual, or just plain odd, items are displayed and demonstrated.

First to the floor was Frank Andrews, who presented two recordings by 'The Roosters' – in honour of the title of the evening's programme – being a military concert party formed during the Great War in Salonika. Their first recordings were not made until 1928 on Regal, and Frank played us the two selections, 'Route March' and 'Lights Out', on G.9200.

Ewen Langford played the reverse side of a pink label Vocalion record which gave a potted synopsis of the opera featured on the

other side – Verdi's *Ernani* – in just under two minutes, this being quite an achievement for a typically convoluted Verdian plot. Ewen also played part of a recording made in 1952 by Anna Russell of her 'highlights' from Wagner's Ring cycle. Colin Armfield brought a commercially produced, mounted photograph, described on the rear as being of 'A Gramophone Shop, c.1920s'. A close examination of the picture reveals, amongst the various horn gramophones, several external-horn cylinder machines, which would appear to date the photo earlier than the 1920s. Colin also told an interesting story of an old record dealer that he had met in the 1960s, who had from time to time pirated Edison cylinders in the early years of the century to sell in his shop.

Barry Raynaud provided various examples of *pro forma* and session logs from a 1950s and 1960s recording studio. Howard Martin played 'Put Me Amongst the Girls' on Scala 1302 by Billy Williams, and showed a copy of a 'Twin' Double Disc, also of Billy Williams, but a test pressing with a handwritten label on two centre holes. Howard also played a selection of Billy Williams' choruses played by the Jumbo Military Band. Tom Little had a 1937 HMV dealers' badge pin and also displayed part of his collection of record sleeves, featuring copies of the labels of the original records they would have contained.

George Frow brought a collection of musical postage stamps, dating from the 1970s, extolling the delights of the province of Bhutan, bordering Himalayan India, and also a recording on Winner of the descriptive selection of the 'Lord Mayor's Military Pageant'. Ken Stroud played two selections of Jim Couza on the hammer dulcimer, recorded in 1991, and Tim Wood-Woolley showed part of his collection of flexible records, including Durium, Goodson and Filmphone.

As an *encore*, Frank played two 7" Zonophone records, both dating from 1900, which he had been unable to play during his joint presentation with Peter Martland, so

bringing to a close another thoroughly enjoyable evening.

**Tim Wood-Woolley**

## **Midlands Group, Birmingham; 15<sup>th</sup> July 2000**

Once again, this meeting was held at the temporary venue, but our carefully arranged programme had had to be changed at short notice. Mick James had unforeseen family commitments, and the Group Vice-Chairman, Geoff Howl, had to cry off due to ill-health. Incidentally, we all wish Geoff a speedy recovery.

However, we were fortunate in obtaining the services of two excellent and very able stand-in speakers.

The first speaker of the evening was long-time Society Member, Bill Dean-Myatt, who gave us a selection of rare and unusual traditional ethnic music recordings, made in various European cities between 1924 and the 1950s. Bill introduced his topic by telling us how the pioneer recording companies had, from the early years of the twentieth century, recorded traditional European music. By 1914 many companies, including The Gramophone Company and Pathé had recorded in most of the European capital cities.

Bill started his recorded illustrations with an interesting traditional French dance tune recorded on the *cabrette* (the Auvergne bagpipes) in 1928, by Martin Cayla, with Paul Demay on accordion (what else?). From Portugal came another 1928 disc, a recording of a *fado* played on the lute (the *guitarra* in Portuguese) and guitar (the *viola* in Portuguese!). A real oddity was the tune 'Manousakia', recorded by the Albania Folk Dance Orchestra in Tirana some time during the 1930s. The Roumanian Gipsy fiddler, Girigoras Dinicu was heard with his own orchestra on a 1927 disc made in Vienna. The earliest record was a March 1924 recording of Yiddish dance music by Natfule Bratondwein. The tune was 'Der Turk in Amerika' played in a style known as 'Klezmer', which can also be heard in the



early recordings of American jazz clarinettist Ted Lewis. For the penultimate selection in this most unusual and enlightening talk, Bill played a Beltona record of 'Roon the Stooks', made in Edinburgh in 1936 by Willie Kemp and Thomas 'Curly' Mackay. The talk came to an end with a very rare 1927 Columbia disc of Anthony Charlton on the Northumbrian small pipes.

By way of a contrast, our second speaker, Ed Parker, delved into the realms of **Humour**. He categorised his selections into six themes – those of Alcoholic Excess, Social Satire, Debunking or 'Taking the Mickey', Extremes, the Attraction of the Opposite Sex, and one he found Unclassifiable!

Ed commenced his programme with Spike Jones and his City Slickers performing 'Clink, Clink, Another Drink', followed by Shelley Berman's hilarious monologue 'The Morning After'. Social Satire was represented by the brilliant English duet Flanders and Swann with their commentary on the hi-fi craze of the 1950s, 'The Song of the CLPGS?') This was followed by Tom Lehrer's 'The Old Dope Peddler', still very appropriate today. For the Debunking theme, we heard 'Lochinvar' from a Hoffnung concert, and Stan Freberg's version of 'Sh'boom'. Extremes were represented by the Grotesque, in 'What a Mouth' by the Two Bills from Bermondsey, whilst in an Anxious mood, The Goons performed 'Whistle Your Cares Away'. The Ambrose recording of 'No! No! A Thousand Times No!' was one of three selections on the Attraction of the Opposite Sex, another being the distinctly unusual record by one Nervous Norvus – 'Ape Call'. Totally unclassifiable was Fred Waring's famous 'Dry Bones', whilst, returning to the opening theme of Alcoholic Excess, that star of British wartime radio shows, Arthur Askey, brought an hilarious second half to a close with 'Kiss Me Goodnight, Sergeant Major'.

**Phil Bennett**

## **Northern Group; Alston Hall, near Preston; 21<sup>st</sup>. May 2000**

Eleven members were present; apologies were received from ten members.

Again we had a two-part meeting, with Derek Parker giving us a talk and recital on Artie Shaw, whom he described as 'the most controversial dance-band leader of the 1935-45 era'.

All the records by Artie Shaw were played on an early front-wind HMV 101 portable gramophone which gave an excellent sound. Records included: 'Coming On', 'Lover Come Back to Me', 'Deep Purple' (with vocal by Helen Forrest), 'Concerto for Clarinet', 'Stardust', 'St. James Infirmary Blues' (second part), 'Any Old Time' (with vocal by Billie Holliday), 'My Heart Stood Still', 'Summit Ridge Drive' (by Artie Shaw's Gramercy Five), 'Rosalee', 'It Had to Be You', 'What is This Thing Called Love', and 'Begin the Beguine'. Interspersed among the records Derek gave us a brief account of Artie Shaw's life. Born on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. May 1910 of immigrant parents, he came to see music as a way out of the ghetto. His first regular job was as a saxophonist with the CBS Studio Orchestra. He came to notice at a Swing Music Festival at the Imperial Theatre, New York, where, as the clarinettist, he fronted a string quartet. He soon was seen as a serious threat to Benny Goodman. His band was at its peak around 1938, but from then on his career was much more uncertain. Artie Shaw loved music, but had trouble with the business side of leading bands, which he often broke up only to reform other combinations.

After a digression on Artie's seven wives, Derek concluded by referring to the end of his career in the mid-fifties when he became completely disillusioned with the music business. He had left RCA Victor in 1945 to join the Musicraft label. Although retired, Artie is still living today.

The second part of the meeting followed on from the November meeting discussing and hearing material from the second period of recording, the mid- and later electric era,

covering both 78s and long-playing records. This was an open session to which a number of members contributed.

Paul Royal had brought along what had begun life as an HMV 109 table model, converted to an electrical reproducer for 78s. We also heard a Columbia electric player originally designed to play through a wireless set. The former was something of a mongrel, consisting of an HMV-like case, a pre-war HMV electric tone arm, a Garrard clockwork motor, and a Dansette amplifier, which Paul had assembled in order to make use of the originally acquired derelict HMV cabinet. It did, indeed, represent the kind of modernisation that eventually overtook many acoustic machines in the electric/radiogram era. Paul started with an acoustic recording of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band to illustrate the deficiencies of acoustic recording techniques. In contrast, we then heard several later, electrically recorded 78s, including 'St. Louis Blues', The Ink Spots' 'Whispering Grass' vocal work with little accompaniment, and Jimmy Durante's 'Chidabee-ch-ch'. These showed the contrast and improvement from acoustic recording to later electrical methods.

Derek Pepperdine then played extracts from the 78 set made for the 1951 Festival of Britain, featuring a distinctive red, white and black Commemorative BBC label. We found the nostalgic sounds fascinating, but I did think the original purchaser might have felt short-changed, since they were clearly lifted from the BBC Archives, with very little original material. Also, this archive material was often played on the wireless at that time.

The final contribution came from John Astin, with a series of 78 extracts, which have been released in CD format, but made originally from October 1929 to December 1939. We heard 'I Belong to Glasgow' (Will Fyffe), 'J'attendrai' (Tino Rossi), 'The Bee Song' (Arthur Askey), and 'Daddy Longlegs' (Alfredo Campoli). John then concluded most appropriately with Flanders & Swann's 'Song of Reproduction', recorded on LP about 1957.

Once again a delightful programme, and thanks to all the members who contributed.

**John Hopkins**

### **Joint Meeting of the Midlands and Northern Groups, Wolverhampton; 11<sup>th</sup> June 2000**

*[A full report on this meeting has been received from Geoff Howl and will appear in the Winter 2000/2001 issue. Pressure of space unfortunately precludes its inclusion in this issue – Ed.]*

### **West of England Group, Exeter; 17<sup>th</sup> June 2000.**

The 17<sup>th</sup> of June saw a re-run of the West of England's social meeting to the Turf Hotel, near Starcross, in Devon. In many ways, the meeting was similar to last year's, and once again we enjoyed good fellowship, good food and good phonographs. The 'Water Mongoose' again carried the assembled company of twelve gracefully along the ancient Exeter Ship Canal, and our portable gramophones provided the entertainment.

There was one important difference this year, however. The event did NOT take place in the eye of a howling gale, and I wonder if last year's somewhat inclement conditions (to put it mildly) put some of our members off. More might not have been merrier, but it was an evening all who attended would have been sorry to miss.



**Figure 1. The *al fresco* entertainment.**





Figure 2. The West of England members aboard the 'Water Mongoose'.

Now I wonder would more enthusiasts be interested in sampling the delights of the West? With that in mind ...

... May I extend  
an OPEN INVITATION  
to ALL MEMBERS of the CLPGS and their  
friends to the next trip?

The 'Water Mongoose' holds fifty, there is plenty of good accommodation here in Exeter, and I shall be holding ...

an ALL DAY EVENT,  
on SATURDAY, 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2001.

The intended format being -

**Arrive for Coffee, 10.00-11.00**

**Lunch provided, 1.00**

**Afternoon - would include Entertainment  
by members of the South-West and time to  
do some Sight-Seeing;**

**Evening - devoted to the boat-trip and  
barbecue.**

Is anyone 'north of Watford' interested? I will publish a reminder, but an early response

would delight the Secretary of the West of England branch of the CLPGS.

**Paul Morris**

██████████ EXETER; EX4 4HE.

Tel. – ██████████ (note new no.)

## **The Wallingford Event; 28/29 May 2000.**

May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> saw a small display by Society Members at Wallingford station on the preserved Great Western Railway branch line from Cholsey to Wallingford, in Oxfordshire. The display was mounted as part of a musical theme weekend being held on the railway, after it was found that a number of the railway's volunteers also shared an interest in mechanical music.

It had initially been hoped to hold a larger display in a nearby hall, but problems with the venue resulted in the event being scaled down to fit in a small, prefabricated building on the station. An appeal for support in the HILLANDALE NEWS brought several responses, and we are grateful to Tom Little, who supported the event by bringing along a fine display, and by being on hand over the weekend to demonstrate the machines and answer visitors' questions.

The display was aimed primarily at the general public rather than the enthusiast, and as such comprised a small but representative selection of machines as follows –

- ◇ Edison Standard phonograph, Model A, 1904
- ◇ HMV Junior Monarch

- ◇ Table grand of unknown origin, c.1912 (see Mystery Machine, in issue 227)
- ◇ Apollo horn gramophone, c.1920
- ◇ HMV model 109
- ◇ HMV model 104
- ◇ Columbia 202 portable
- ◇ HMV portable model 97 (playing a lateral-cut Pathé disc)
- ◇ Portable of unknown make, supplied by a Reading dealer in 1926.

There were displays covering basic historical information on the development of recorded sound, and a display of records and sleeves, including a considerable number from the dealers of nearby Reading.

Around 250 visitors attended and a good number showed considerable interest in the display. There was a lot of reminiscing, with most conversations running 'I/My father/My grandfather had one of those – we threw it away/lost it/don't know what happened to it'. Most visitors had never seen a cylinder phonograph before, so this generated considerable interest. It was quite surprising the number of children who have never seen a gramophone before.

It is hoped to repeat this event next year, ideally in a larger venue, so that it can be expanded to provide a greater range of exhibits, and thus be of interest to the enthusiast as well as the general public.

**John Cook**



A view of the display at Wallingford station.



# Letters

## Book Review – American Record Labels and Companies [see this issue, page 164 – Ed.]

Nobody could quarrel with the noble intention embodied in the title *American Record Labels and Companies: An Encyclopedia* or could fail to appreciate the enormous amount of work entailed in producing such a survey. But the current scope of this book suggests that perhaps it should have been entitled *American Popular Record Labels* (or some such).

For years I have been interested enough in classical ('serious') music on 78s to acquire many examples of American discs, and I proceeded naturally to obtaining the relatively few standard works on the subject, such as *The World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music* ('WERM': 1952, etc.) and its forebears, various editions of *The Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music* ('GSERM': 1936, 1942 and 1948). These really are very much the main starting-point for finding out about classical music on 78s, along with the surveys done by David Hall (*The Record Book*, 1940/1941, etc.).

The Gramophone Shop books and the intervening monthly supplements (produced by a New York mail-order record shop) all carry a listing of current record labels at the front: some extra labels may be found in the main body of the works, but on the whole the lists are a good starting-point. As well as the Big Companies (Victor, HMV, Columbia, Brunswick, Decca, etc.) there are listed a small number of minor American labels. In fact, there are so few of these that it is possible to deal with most of them here –

Friends of Recorded Music; Gamut; Keynote; Musicraft; New Music (Quarterly) Recordings; Roycroft; Technichord; Timely.

In addition, there are labels such as the following, which appear in various Gramophone Shop supplements and David Hall's *Record Book* –

Bost; Co-Art; Continental; Guild; Schirmer.

It is astonishing to find that, out of all the above minor labels (which all appeared before 1943), only Keynote, Musicraft and Roycroft apparently merit any mention in this encyclopedia (significantly, Keynote and Musicraft also issued jazz and popular music). Continental is here presumed to be different from the very early 'pirate' label mentioned in the book.

It must be admitted that these labels often kept to the relatively obscure backwaters of early music and 20<sup>th</sup> century concert music, although that in itself is no reason for ignoring them altogether: significant new music by Bloch, Cowell, Griffes, Ives, Sessions, Shostakovich and others was first recorded on these labels.

But maybe instead you prefer to talk 'personalities': in that case you might consider that Bost issued records of Lotte Lenya with songs by Kurt Weill; Co-Art recorded Ellen Beach Yaw; the violinist Szigeti recorded for New Music Recordings; Schirmer issued an album of Nina Koshetz singing Rachmaninov songs, and also Benjamin Britten playing piano duets; and Continental recorded four discs of Bartók playing his own piano music (all his other solo 78s add up to only about a dozen discs). Surely some of these issues must rank in importance with anything to be found amongst minor popular labels!

Thus it appears that the 'encyclopedic' nature of this present book is unexpectedly flawed in an important area: to have omitted one or two of these minor 'classical' labels might be regarded as unfortunate (and almost inevitable); to have inexplicably omitted most of them seems like carelessness. Did the author not think to ask any serious collector of 'classical' 78s? Or even just to look in the common reference books?

So I would say to readers that this book may be suitable for general interest 'detail' for

very many American companies great and small, its wide-ranging usefulness for the popular label collector is not to be denied, and of course its wonderful and brilliant array of labels is a joy to behold. But if you want (as I have wanted) to find even tiny crumbs of information about many of the minor American *classical* labels, then I must warn you that this encyclopedia is not the place to look.

Peter Adamson;  
IT Services, University of St. Andrews, St.  
Andrews, FIFE; KY16 9SX.

### **Lionel Moncton, singer-composer; and a compliment to the CLPGS**

In his report on the May 2000 Birmingham meeting, Peter Dempsey comments about Lionel Moncton singing 'not one of his own works, but 'Jack's The Boy' from Sidney Jones' 1896 musical, 'The Geisha'. He will no doubt be interested to learn, according to the notes accompanying the excellent Hyperion record of 'The Geisha', that the recording uses "three numbers not by Jones himself – 'Jack's The Boy' and 'The Toy Monkey' composed by Lionel Moncton, and 'The Jewel of Asia' composed by James Philp". Interestingly, the wonderful Ohio Light Opera recording of Moncton's 'The Arcadians' says the musical numbers are divided between Moncton and Edward Talbot 'whose styles are virtually indistinguishable', then goes on to say that Moncton 'spent much of his career contributing songs to other composers' shows'.

Another subject – I wish George Taylor would cease carping about HILLANDALE's content, be grateful that it exists and appreciate your effort to be inclusive of all aspects of the hobby. The day will come when Frank Andrews' series will be exhausted and content will tilt in Mr. Taylor's favour, and others will be disappointed. I am most appreciative to have read HILLANDALE NEWS for nearly forty years, and am awed by the expansive coverage over that span. I found it advisable to liquidate most of my

large collection of phonographs and gramophones when approaching retirement in 1987 – I treasure the examples I retained for the remainder of my life, and eagerly await every issue published by CLPGS and its fellow organisations worldwide. I owe you all continued support for what you've given me.

John D. Baldwin III;  
[REDACTED] Lakewood, OH 44107; USA.

### **A Politer Name for Crapophones?**

I have been following the matter of the 'Crapophone' with great interest.

Five years ago, I received a price list and photo for a gramophone almost identical to the illustration to Mike Field's original article in HILLANDALE NEWS no. 224, from a company in the UK offering it as a replica model, at £250. I did not buy one but have seen one bought recently by a friend for, I suspect, a similar price. Because of Mr. Field's article, I could easily recognise it for what it is. (No, I did not disillusion the owner, who is happy in his innocence.)

Judging from Howard Hope's leader in issue no. 229, the subject has generated some heated correspondence, including that from Charles Stopani in the current issue, no. 230. I agree with Mr. Stopani that without professional know-how, an otherwise intelligent person could be easily fooled. So thank you, Mike Field, for your original cautionary tale. However, that is not the main purpose of this letter.

The word 'Crapophone' may be descriptive and perhaps witty when used in conversation in 'the trade', but it is ugly in print and unsuitable for such a publication as HILLANDALE NEWS. It should be dropped forthwith! I am happy to provide the following alternatives, any of which would better grace these pages –

SHAMOPHONE

SPURIORAM

HOAXOGRAPH

SPOOFOPHONE



**GRAMOPHONEY**  
(my own favourite)

**PHONEYGRAPH**

(another favourite, but I fear that North of the Border it will sound like the real thing!)

I trust that these suggestions may be well received, and look forward to a 'Crapophone'-free HILLANDALE, a fine and recently much improved publication, much enjoyed by –

Yours truly,

Eric Smith;

██████████, ANTIGUA, West Indies

*[We must admit to having some sympathy with Eric Smith's views as to the use of the word 'Crapophone'. The term is only of general usage within the trade – the non-cognoscenti are not yet aware of the term, and perhaps we are unwise to give it further credence. But we think it is right that these machines should receive a pejorative name, if only to convey to the uninitiated how truly awful they are. Eric Smith's alternative names have the aura of politeness we should seek, but there is nothing polite about the dishonesty with which unscrupulous dealers pass these rubbishy machines off as the genuine article. As playable machines, they are really only fit for the skip, so perhaps we may be permitted to venture some alternative names, to add to Eric Smith's suggestions. How about the 'Fakophone', the 'Scrapophone', or the 'Skipophone'? – Ed.]*

**Melba, Kubelik, Lapierre, and Roper**

In May 1913, Melba recorded Gounod's *Ave Maria* for HMV (matrix Z7323f), catalogue no. 03333), accompanied by Jan Kubelik (violin), Professor Lapierre (piano), and S. Roper (organ). According to the notes accompanying the EMI reissue on LP of Melba's London recordings (RLS 719), this record was difficult to play (also apparent from the LP transcription), and it was replaced in October 1913 by a similar Victor recording (matrix C13897). The original catalogue number was retained, and the label

on the new disc (of which I have a copy) appears to show that the same artists took part in the Victor recording.

This strikes me as unlikely. It is instructive to listen to the two versions. The London recording reveals the organ playing one or two sustained low pedal notes (only?), while these notes are absent on the Victor recording (played electrically); indeed, I question whether an organ was involved at all. I also think that the organ on the London record would not have been heard on the average contemporary gramophone – and this being the case, the organ was omitted for the Victor recording. Was this so?

On the Victor recording, I suppose the eminent Jan Kubelik *could* have taken part; Professor Lapierre I can't comment on; but S. Roper's presence seems very unlikely. The 1915 'Who's Who in Music' lists Edgar Stanley Roper (born 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1878) as assistant organist at Westminster Abbey, and surely this is the S. Roper taking part in the 1913 London recording? Imagine, performing for the gramophone with the likes of Melba and Kubelik! – a great thrill for the 34-year old local lad (not to mention the fee).

However, I can't see HMV sending Mr. Roper to the States to make the American recording, which leaves the question of just who were Melba's accompanists in America? Interestingly, in the 1918 HMV catalogue entry for 03333, Lapierre and Kubelik are mentioned, but not Roper – so maybe there really was no organ part.

Dr. G. W. Taylor;

██████████ HARROGATE; HG2  
OLE.

**Editorial Content of HILLANDALE NEWS**

What's wrong with it? NOTHING that I can see.

Issue 230 is excellent. The article on the 'Savoy Bands' is brilliant – I look forward to the next instalment. Dave Cooper's articles on the HMV portables have been fascinating and had me looking more closely at my 101

and 97 models (I would like a 102 at the right price).

Frank Andrews' labels series I agree will run and run, but it is interesting to me (and I assume many others) to see the rich variety of companies, big and small, who issued 78s – all part of our fascinating hobby. How diverse can you get?

I was a Member in the late 1970s, and cancelled my Membership in 1980 due to the content of HILLANDALE NEWS at the time, which seemed to be full of Opera and Pre-Electric Era articles – well, music did carry on after 1925! I only joined again after seeing the Winter 1997 issue and realising the difference over the years.

The magazine is now an excellent read which I look forward to every three months, and wish it was more frequent. Please carry on with machine items and record/biographies – the balance to my mind is now 'spot on'. Don't go back to the days of 20 years ago and you will keep my subscription for many years to come.

I wear my Society tie with pride and have found it a conversation piece.

Sorry, George Taylor, what do you want?

Paul Royal;

[REDACTED] Flixton, Greater Manchester; M41 8TL.

*[To be fair to all the widely varying shades of opinion in CLPGS, time is on our side. Twenty years ago, the CD era was only just beginning, and LPs were still current technology. Now, microgroove is obsolete; and that is just one example of the technological changes that are occurring in sound recording constantly. So, as time passes, the scope of the Society's interest will increase in its historical depth and in the range of the technology and sound recordings it encompasses. But the acoustic era will not be forgotten. - Ed.]*

### A Serious Proposition

I was surprised to see my letter concerning the contents of HILLANDALE actually in print

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– though I have no objection to your publishing it. Perhaps I might have toned down some of my remarks. In particular, I should not wish to offend Frank Andrews, whom I regard as the leading researcher into the history of records and recording.

However, my remarks concerning publishing Frank's record label work as a book were advanced as a serious proposition. I don't know how Frank feels about it; but assuming that all the label work is already written up, I think a book with all the information to hand would be welcomed. Has this possibility been considered, and a cost estimate made? Two hundred copies at (say) £25 each would raise £5000. What about circulating CLPGS Members as possible subscribers, which would raise some revenue to start with?

Dr. G. W. Taylor

[REDACTED] HARROGATE; HG2 0LE.

**Response from the Bookshop** – *This project has already been broadly discussed with the parties involved, and Frank Andrews has undertaken to up-date the earlier published articles, when time permits. I have already discussed with our current printer the possibilities of this project, which will be expensive due to the extent of colour work. Members may accept that the most viable compromise is that, using an A5-size booklet of 64 pages, 50% of which could contain, in a reduced form at six per page, some 192 full colour label examples. They could be sold in 'instalments', and when a reasonable quantity of issues equals a volume, these could be bound together in hardback form. The 'instalments' would however, also fit in the Society binders, and, when the next batch is ordered, a suitable title could be printed on the spine, instead of HILLANDALE NEWS.*

George Woolford

### Mystery Machine, no. 1

I would be obliged if you could publish this attached 'pic' in the HILLANDALE Letters page, with a call to Members to help me identify the manufacturer's motif – it appears



to be 'B.M.S' or any other variation of this acronym using the three letters. The motor is 'Garrard' and there are no other identifying marks.



Figure 1. The mystery 'BMS' machine.

I can be reached at this address and E-mail –  
Russell Henderson  
Miller International Loss Adjusters (H.K.)  
Ltd.;

Wanchai, HONG KONG.

E-mail - [REDACTED]

### Mystery Machine, no. 2

Some years ago, I acquired the remnants of an old 'coin-in-the-slot' record player – Swiss, I think. It had been my intention, when I retired, to spend time renovating the machine, but this is well beyond my capabilities. You will see from the enclosed photograph that it had a central spindle which held six turntables – (all missing) – and six tone-arms and pick-ups. I have only one of the sound-boxes, named 'Selecta'. I think

most of the coin operation and record select gear is there – under the lid.

I am at something of a loss as to what to do with this machine. I don't particularly want to sell, but would like to restore it to working order, if this is possible – a big 'if', I think! I am wondering if any of your Members might be interested in making any, preferably constructive, suggestions.



Figure 2. General view of front of machine - door closed, showing five tone arms, the sixth and lowest missing, and that above in the lowered position.



Figure 3. Looking into the cabinet from the left side, left panel removed. again showing five of the six tone arms.



Figure 4. Detail of top of cabinet, showing controls.

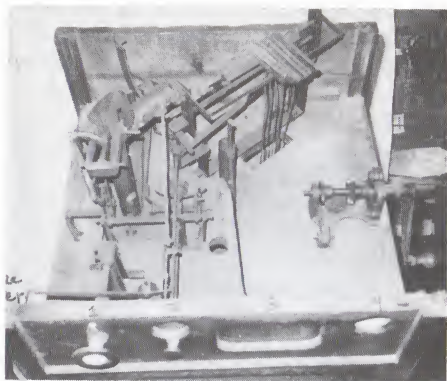


Figure 5. View of control mechanisms, with top of cabinet removed -

- 1 - the assumed 'Start' switch
- 2 - Selector to choose record - 1 to 6
- 3 - Window to display record choice (or instructions)
- 4 - ?

P. A. Hall;

██████████ HARPENDEN; AL5 5NP.

*[Christopher Proudfoot makes the following comments: I cannot identify your gramophone (not a record player, which would reproduce electrically); I have never seen one like it, and the chances of finding another one like it to copy the missing parts are not good, I fear. I think it unlikely that the Selecta soundbox is original - Selecta was the brand-name of accessories sold by a firm of wholesalers (later becoming the sales agency for Decca), and Selecta sound-boxes are usually after-market replacements. - Ed.]*

### Caruso's Earliest Recordings - Corrections Revisited, no. 1

I am writing in response to the letter by E. J. Passmore, issue #230 of HILLDALE NEWS, entitled 'Caruso's Recordings - Correction'. I would like to know the source of his information, since it does not agree with the recent(?) discographies that I have read.

The discography by Dr. John R. Bolig in Michael Scott's book *The Great Caruso* (1988), and the discography by William R. Moran in Enrico Caruso Jr. & Andrew



Farkas's book *Enrico Caruso: My Father and My Family* (1990) both state that the first session was for G & T on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1902. And both are specific about the date for the 7 AICC/Zonophone records – April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1903. Only the 3 AICC/Pathé cylinders/discs don't have a specific date, but October-December 1903 is suggested (although the Pearl 'Caruso Edition' suggests Spring 1903).

As for the number of recordings in existence, I quickly counted 236 on the Pearl 'Caruso Edition' (I didn't count the recordings contained in the RCA 'Complete Caruso' set). This doesn't include either the 1930s electrical re-creations, or the new 'Caruso 2000' re-creations. If E. J. Passmore knows of many more recordings, then I, for one, would very much like to hear them!

And finally, whilst the suggestion that Caruso had rejected masters destroyed is credible, I find it hard to believe that he was personally responsible for the destruction of *all* the rejected masters.

In future, I suggest that the magazine should ensure that anyone stating supposed facts should quote their sources.

Simon Buckmaster;

Redmond, WA  
98052-7013; USA.

## **Caruso's Earliest Recordings – Corrections Revisited, no. 2**

Caruso's first recordings took place in Milan on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1902, with Fred Gaisberg in charge of recording, on behalf of The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. Incidentally, the story that he paid £100 to Caruso, because Head Office in London were against the fee, is a lot of poppycock, as our ex-Chairman, Peter Martland, discovered and presented the facts to a London meeting of the Society.

The next recording session, one year later, to the month, was carried out by The Anglo-Italian Commerce Company, of Milan, who were recorders of cylinders (blanks supplied by Pathé, according to John Dales) and who arranged for disc recordings once they became the Italian agents for the International

Zonophone Company. Those recordings of Caruso were taken in April 1903. This was established by Len Petts, our ex-member, who was the curator of EMI Archives. The month of April 1903 was also confirmed by a Dutchman, whose name I believe was Oischot, and who traced the personal movements of Caruso in 1903 and concluded he could only have been in Milan to record in April 1903 before he sailed for America.

At first, AICC had recordings on soft wax, then hard wax cylinders, and a part of its business was to supply other concerns with 'their own' cylinders. Likewise Pathé also supplied others with blanks and finished cylinders under customers' own names: Georges Dutreih being one such concern.

AICC announced the Caruso recordings just at the time that The International Zonophone Company of Berlin and New York was being acquired by The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd, and it was under the latter's control that most pressings of the Caruso Zonophones were issued. The first issues took place one day before The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. took control. They were listed in Zonophone catalogues after May 1903, but not in Britain. Caruso wrote a testimonial letter for The International Zonophone Company, which was advertised in the *Phonographische Zeitschrift*. It read, '*I may say that I consider your Zonophones are really admirable and they prevailed upon me to accept your invitation to sing a number of pieces for you*', signed Enrique [*sic*] Caruso, and dated April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1903. The AICC cylinders were issued by Pathé at the latter end of 1903 and did sell in Britain.

Caruso did not record for Pathé in 1900, and it was not in 1902 that he recorded for AICC, the International Zonophone Agents.

Caruso was not contractually bound to The Gramophone & Typewriter after he recorded for them in 1902; thus the International Zonophone Company seized the opportunity, in 1903, to record the then successful tenor, via its agency, the Anglo-Italian Commerce Co., and that concern took the opportunity to

record Caruso on cylinders for itself and for Pathé, with whom it had trading relationships. Frank Andrews; London, NW10 0HA.

*The following is a paraphrase of Mr. E. J. Passmore's response: The book 'Enrico Caruso, His Recorded Legacy' by J. Freestone and H. J. Drummond (1960) considers that the three Pathé records were the first ones Caruso made, citing [unspecified] information that the records were on sale on the continent before the end of 1900, the year in which Tosca had its world première. Freestone and Drummond also point out that these recordings were made by the Anglo-Italian Commerce Co. on behalf of Pathé Frères, and were originally issued as 3½" diameter cylinders. They were subsequently reissued as vertical-cut discs, and still later as lateral-cut discs.*

*[Mr. Passmore also confirms that information in Michael Scott's book indicates a total of 498 recordings, of which 185 were destroyed and 62 were held [i.e., not issued], giving some 250 that were used for the Pearl recordings. Also, some of the unissued recordings were also included in the Pearl issues, but it would take further research to identify these.*

*His information on the destruction of matrices is based on comments made by his late father-in-law, who worked for The Gramophone Co. and witnessed Caruso making this request when visiting the company's premises.*

*Finally, Mr. Passmore comments that there will always be a doubt as to the true dates of his first recordings as all the people involved have passed away. Therefore, whatever sources we have, it should be accepted that we may differ over these as people have done in the past. – Ed.]*

**Editors' comment:** We trust this matter has now been given sufficient of an airing to ensure that readers can make themselves aware of the various aspects of the

*controversy, and of the reliability of the various sources. Therefore, unless some wholly new and well-authenticated information can be adduced, we intend to regard this matter as closed.*

### Postscript to 'We Also Have Our Own Records', part 14 – the '88' label

In HILLDALE NEWS, no. 230, I mentioned '88' Records and asked for further information. I am pleased to report that member Bill Dean-Myatt responded with the following discographical information –

Cyrril SCUTT, pianoforte, recorded 12<sup>th</sup> August 1950

'88' 881	PP-1	Porterhouse Boogie Woogie
	PP-2	Rockin' the Blues

Recorded 15<sup>th</sup> November 1950

'88' 882	PP-3	Delta Express
	PP-4	Steady Stomp Boogie.

The records were listed in 'The Complete Independent Record Catalogue', produced by Farley Radio Services Ltd., 100 Charing Cross Road, WC.2, whose registered office was at 23 Thomas Street, London, SE.18. The catalogue was dated May 1951.

According to member Eddie Shaw's label series listings those were the only two '88' discs issued.

Frank Andrews;  
London, NW.10.

### The Good Companions – Corrections

Further to my latest part on HMV portables (issue no. 230), Roger Thorne has pointed out a couple of errors I made.

Firstly, on p.68, the year coding actually started with the letter 'B' on its own, which relates to the year 1936.

Secondly, on p.70, the 'equipments' were sets of parts for cases to be built around after arrival in India. Complete machines held at EMI would be sent anywhere BUT India!

Dave Cooper;

██████████, BLACKPOOL; FY3  
8HB.



# The CLPGS BOOKSHOP

WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA, Norfolk; NR23 1RD.

Telephone –

## PUBLICATIONS available for the Autumn of 2000.

### DISCOVERING ANTIQUE PHONOGRAPHS – T. C. Fabrizio and G. F. Paul.

The third hardback book issued by these hardworking pair. Dealing with the period 1877 to 1929. 244 pages containing some 400 coloured photographs. Historic machines pictured and detailed where only single examples, worldwide are known. Cost is **£39-95 plus postage** and is listed as item **BD-46**.

### PARLOPHONE 12" 'E'-prefixed series – Frank Andrews and Michael Smith. A

complete listing of the Vocal, Instrumental and Orchestral recordings drawn from many earlier sources, as issued on this well-known purple label from 1923. Includes the later dark blue labels and artists' recordings; a series being used until 1956. Eight pages of Introduction and History. 188 pages of listings including six-page index. Spaces have been filled with portraits lifted from a 1926 Parlophone catalogue, together with their brief biographical notes. EMI have given the Society permission to reproduce some nine variants of the Parlophone label. Cost is **£25-00 per copy**, reference no. **BD-53**.

### COMPLETE LIST of up to date RECORDS made by the NORTH AMERICAN PHONOGRAPH Co. List dated November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1893. Eight pages, A5 size, on sepia, thick paper,

advertises Edison Electric Phonograph @ \$175, and the Bell Tainter Columbia-style treddle machine @ \$140. Listings of 'plain number' & 'B' records @ \$1 and \$1-50. Cost is **£2-50 each plus postage**, and listed as item **CL-38**.

### ZONOPHONE SINGLE-SIDED RECORDS – Frank Andrews and Ernie Bayly.

The definitive listing of all the 5", 7", 10" and 12" records sold in Great Britain from 1904 to 1913. Pre-acquisition discs available during the first issues. Covers Band and Instrumental, Operatic, Concert Hall and Music Hall. Recorded by artists or with pseudonyms given where applicable. Records in French, Italian, German and Hebrew. 290 pages of text with full Index. Introduction by Frank Andrews, and coloured examples of styles of labels. A4 size, soft cover, **cost £24**, reference no. **BD-44**.

**THE E.M.G. STORY – Francis James.** Lavishly illustrated with many advertisements and photographs of the period (1916-1908) and with appendices which tabulate the technical details of every model of English handmade gramophones, 'The EMG Story' can genuinely be said to be the very first chapter of High Fidelity reproduction. Issued in hardback, 144 pages, over 100 illustrations; **cost £15**, reference no. **BD-41**.

**SOCIETA ITALIANA di FONOTIPIA.** Reproduction of an original 12½" × 7½" catalogue in two colours (red and olive-green), front dated 1907. Lavish production featuring Operatic and Instrumental artists recording for the Fonotipia label. Biographical details in Italian, with large photographs and recordings available. As reviewed by Dr. Martland in HILLANDALE NEWS no. 223. Issued as item **BD-42**, **cost of £12-00**.

**CINCH 10" double-sided RECORDS – Arthur Badrock and Frank Andrews.** This publication is about to be printed. It will now be available in October, and cost is to be announced next issue.

**BRUNSWICK 10" '100' series - Arthur Badrock.** Item **CL-50**, **cost £2-00 per copy**.

Please, please remember – Postage Costs are – Inland, minimum postage 50p; or add 10% of purchase price for any book, e.g., Fonotipia is £12 plus £1-20 postage. Overseas rate is 'plus 15%', minimum cost of 'plus £1'. Cheques to be made out in favour of CLPGS Books, NOT me personally. **George Woolford.**

# CHRISTIE'S

South Kensington



Edison 'Parlor' Tinfoil Phonograph. Sold 6 December 1999 for £32,200  
Record auction price for a phonograph

## We don't sell records... We break them

Gramophones,  
Phonographs and  
accessories in  
Mechanical  
Music Sales  
at Christie's

### 2000 Auctions:

6 April  
27 July  
14 December

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